

THE  
Christian Religion  
FOUNDED ON  
REASON:  
OR,  
TWO ESSAYS  
ON  
Natural and Revealed  
RELIGION:  
WITH

Some Particular CONSIDERATIONS on the  
Doctrines of the TRINITY, the FALL, the  
RESURRECTION and ETERNAL PUNISH-  
MENT: Tending to demonstrate, not only that  
the *Christian Revelation* is Divine, but that it is  
the Only Publick Divine Revelation, which is  
now entirely in Force; and likewise to prove,  
that some of those Doctrines which have been  
thought to furnish the most considerable Ob-  
jections against it, are to be regarded as so many  
Arguments in it's Favour.

*By Sam. Collier* K

---

By the Author of the *Impartial Enquiry*  
*into the Existence and Nature of God.*

---

*Credo quia [non] impossibile est.*

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. and J. KNAPTON, R. ROBINSON, in  
St. Paul's Church-Yard, J. CLARK and R. HETT, in the  
Poultry, and F. CLAY, without Temple-Bar. 1729.

Э Н Т  
Chinian Religion  
in  
TWO HAVES  
of  
Mystic and Revealed  
RELION



Some Instances of the  
Deceit of the Pagan, the Heathen, the  
Arian, the Nestorian, the Pauline  
Trotting of the Romish, not only that  
they are in the Pagan Religion which is  
the true Religion Divine Revealed, prove  
you are not in the Heathen, the Nestorian  
or the Pauline Religion which is true  
Christianity, the true Religion of Christ  
which is in the Pagan, the Heathen, the  
Arian, the Nestorian, the Pauline.

---

Being A Report of the late Bishop of London  
and the Duke of York, and the Duke of York

---

London.

Printed for J. and J. Dodsley, A. Dodsley,  
and J. Dodsley, Cambridge, J. C. Rivington,  
and J. Dodsley, 1782.

THE PREFACE.

iii

Information of such odd things  
has been given to posterity as is very scarce  
and that which is still more singular



THE

PREFACE.

**I**t was not till after very serious Reflections, that I resolved, some Years since, to publish An Impartial Enquiry into the Existence and Nature of GOD. I was apprehensive that what I was about to propose (though with the utmost Submission) concerning the Philosophical Opinion of an Absolute or Positive Infinity, might prove shocking to some good People, to whom it was not my Intention to give the least Occasion of Offence.

## The P R E F A C E.

sence. But the Desire to promote what appeared to be the Interest of Truth and Religion, prevailing over that and all other Considerations, induced me, at last, to communicate the Remarks I had made during a long Course of Thinking. And as the Love of Truth (if I may be allowed to say it) was ever my predominant Passion, I doubt not but I shall be much more ready to retract than I was to publish, whenever it can be made appear to be for the Interest of Truth.

The following Essays, as they owe their Being to the same Cause, so they plead the same Excuse with the mentioned Enquiry. The Christian Revelation has ever seemed to me to be so very Valuable a Part of Truth, that I could not but think it agreeable to the Character of a Lover of Truth to shew his Good-will, at least, by appearing in its Defence, when openly attack'd and insulted. But as divers Learned Pens were engaged in Clearing the External Proofs of Christianity, I chiefly applied myself to set its Internal Evidence in as full a View as possible by discovering its Reasonableness. For it was ever my Opinion, that no greater Service could be done to any Scheme of Religion than to demonstrate

## The P R E F A C E.

iv

demonstrate it's Agreeableness to Reason. In attempting this, I had the Satisfaction to find myself considerably assisted by certain Principles contained in the Enquiry.

I thought it not improper to premise a short Sketch of Natural Religion, wherein it is my Endeavour to shew not only how far unassisted Reason has actually led Men in that Part of it which immediately regards God, but likewise how far it might have led them, if duly attended to. By this Means I propose more clearly to demonstrate both the Agreement of Christianity with Natural Religion, and it's Advantages above it. The Whole is cast into a Method adapted to prove the Neglect of the Practice of Religion to be the worst of Ingratitude.

The Scheme of the Trinity, which is inserted in the Essay on Revealed Religion, and for which a Foundation was laid in the Enquiry, is humbly proposed to the Consideration of such who being, perhaps justly, prejudiced against the Arian, Semi-Arian and other Schemes, yet cannot come entirely into that which is esteemed the Orthodox Opinion, and who, for that Reason, are in Danger of

The P R E F A C E.  
*entertaining ill Thoughts of the Christian  
Revelation.*

*As some Complaints have been made  
of Obscurity with regard to Two Argu-  
ments, proposed in the Enquiry as Proofs  
of the Divine Nature's including All  
Possible Perfections, and of it's being  
but One. I persuade myself that an Ex-  
planation of those Arguments (which  
seem to me to be both of them New, and  
to carry with them a demonstrative Evi-  
dence) will not be unacceptable to the  
Reader.*

*The Proof of the Divine Nature's in-  
cluding All Possible Perfections, may,  
tis conceived, be cleared by the following  
Propositions :*

No Being can exist with an Absolute  
or Independent, Eternal Necessity, but  
such an One whose Nature or Essence  
absolutely excludes the very Possibility  
of ceasing to Be; or whose ceasing to  
Be is an Absolute Impossibility or Con-  
tradiction.

But no Nature or Essence can abso-  
lutely exclude the very Possibility of  
ceasing to Be, unless it absolutely ex-  
cludes

eludes All Possible Imperfection. The Reason is, because wherever any Imperfection either actually is, or is possible to be, there it can be no Absolute Impossibility or Contradiction for any other (and even the Utmost) Imperfection to be likewise. And consequently, there must be a Possibility of ceasing to Be; for as much as the Utmost Imperfection is the Want of all Perfection, or a total Privation of Being itself.

Therefore since the very Nature or Essence of an Absolutely Necessary Being, excludes the very Possibility of ceasing to Be, it can be for no other Reason than because it absolutely excludes All Possible Imperfections.

But that Being whose Nature or Essence absolutely excludes All Possible Imperfections, cannot but possess or include All Possible Perfections. The Reason is, because the Want of any possible Kind or Degree of Perfection, is an Imperfection.

The Proof of the Unity of God, may be thus explained:

A 4 Every

## The P R E F A C E.

Every Being must have (if not a Cause, yet) a Reason of it's Existence.

The Reason of the Existence of an Absolutely Necessary Being is included in it's own Essence, and is (as was proved) the Utmost Possible Perfection.

Perfection is One and Uniform; i. e. All Possible Perfections agree in One common Uniform Nature, or they agree in the General Nature and Notion of Goodness; which admits of no Inconsistence or Contrariety.

Since All Possible Perfections agree in One common Nature which admits of no Inconsistence or Contrariety, they could not necessarily require more than One Original Subject; or (which is the same) they could not be a Necessary Reason of the Existence of more than One Eternal or Necessary Being.

Therefore to suppose more than One Eternal or Necessarily-existent Being, is to suppose Necessary Existence without a Necessary Reason of it: Which is no less an Absurdity than it would be to suppose an Effect without a Cause.

By

## The PREFACE.

ix

By the First of these Arguments, I think it plainly appears, that the Existence and Perfection of the Divine Being is not founded on a Sort of External Unlimited Necessity, to be supposed as antecedent in Order of Nature \* to it's Existence, but that, on the contrary, the Necessity of it's Existence (which is no more than a Mode or Manner of it's Existence, and therefore ought not to be conceived, in any Sense, as antecedent to it) is founded on it's own Internal Perfection. I the rather take Notice of this, because the Supposition of such an Absolutely Unlimited, and, as it were, Antecedent Necessity (from which some derive their main Proof of an Absolute Infinity) leads directly to Pantheism, or tends to oblige us with Spinoza (who likewise supposed such an Absolutely Unlimited Necessity as a Support to his Absolutely Infinite Nature) to infer that all Action, as well as Existence, is absolutely necessary. For 'tis plain that an Independent and Absolutely Unlimited Necessity cannot be confined or limited to the Divine Existence, but must extend itself likewise to the Divine Action, and even to our own both Existence

\* See Answers to Letters at the End of the Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, p. 36, 37.

## The P R E F A C E.

Existence and Action. But this Inference would deprive us of the Subject on which we are going to treat, by destroying the very Notion of Religion.

It must likewise be observed, that this Argument leads us to discover that Particular Perfection which is to be conceived as the most immediate Reason of Eternal or Absolutely Necessary Existence and of all other Perfections \*. For it is not difficult to perceive, that Imperfection infers a Possibility of ceasing to Be, no otherwise than as it presupposes Impotence. From whence it's obvious to conclude, that where there is no Possibility of ceasing to Be (i. e. where there is an Absolute Necessity of Existence) there can be no Kind or Degree of Impotence, or there must be Omnipotence, and that where there is Omnipotence there can be no Imperfection, or (which is the same) there must be All Perfection.

The Two aforesaid Arguments do likewise absolutely subvert the entire System of Spinoza, which supposes the Eternity of Matter. For as they prove there

\* See the Impartial Enquiry, p. 169.

there is but One Eternal or absolutely Necessary Being, so they likewise prove (as might easily be shewn) that the One Eternal Being in it's Entire Substance, without Distinction of Parts, contains All Possible Perfections: Whereas, 'tis plain (whatever Spinoza may have pretended to the contrary) that Matter is not One but Many Beings, and that among those Many Beings, there is none that includes or possesses All Possible Perfections; none that is not in some respect Imperfect. Therefore, as neither any Part of Matter, nor even it's whole Mass, can be that One Substance which is the Subject of All Possible Perfections, Matter must, by Consequence, be a Created, Dependent Nature.

'Tis further demonstrable from the same Principles, that the Substratum or Subject of All Possible Perfections must be a Substance which is Unbounded and Indivisible, and which, by Consequence, penetrates, pervades and comprehends the Whole Material System, being Itself comprehended by nothing.

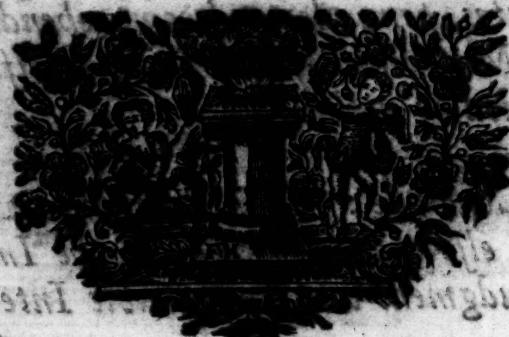
To Conclude: I submit whatever is here or elsewhere proposed, to the Impartial Judgment and Favourable Interpretation

## The PREFACE.

tation of all sincere Lovers of Truth; not doubting of their Excuse for what may appear to have been said amiss with an honest Design, nor of their Approbation and Patronage in Case any Thing shall be found agreeable to Scripture and sound Reason.

That the following Essays may meet with Success, no farther than as they are subservient to the Cause of Truth, is the hearty Wish of the Author.

S. COLLIBER.



# CONTENTS.

## PART I.

### Of Natural Religion.

#### SECT. I.

**N**ATURAL and Revealed Religion described. The Laws of Nature, and our Perpetual Obligation by them, demonstrated. P. 1.

#### SECT. II.

Pure Natural Religion never professed or practised by any Nation. The early Expectation and Dependance of Mankind on Extraordinary Revelation. The Reason of it. Frequent Pretensions of the Ancient Lawgivers to Supernatural Revelation. P. 5.

#### SECT. III.

The Doctrine of One Eternal or Uncaused Being not unknown to the Gentiles. Most probably derived from Tradition. The wisest of the Philosophers fully agreed in ascribing all Perfections to the one Eternal Being. P. 9.

#### SECT. IV.

The Passions which are naturally excited by the Consideration of the Divine Perfections;

## The CONTENTS.

ans; viz. *Admiration*, tending to *Speculation*, and *Hope* and *Fear*, tending to *Practice*. *Gratitude* (or *Love* heightened by the *Sense* of *Benefits*) a more noble Principle of Religious Practice than either *Hope* or *Fear*. p. 11.

## SECT. V.

*The several Parts of Natural Religion (as it regards Practice) deduced from Gratitude.* p. 16.

## SECT. VI.

*Of Praise. That God is the most proper Object of it.* p. 17.

## SECT. VII.

*Of Prayer. The Practice of addressing God through a Mediator no Dictate of Reason. Of the necessary Circumstances of Prayer. Of Swearing and Vowing in the Name of God.* p. 21.

## SECT. VIII.

*Of Repentance. Its Nature and Efficacy, as far as discoverable by the Light of Nature or Reason. No otherwise pleasing to God than as it prepares the Way for Amendment of Life.*

p. 27.

## SECT. IX.

*Of Patience. Wherein it consists, or how far it extends according to the Prospect yielded by the Light of Nature.* p. 35.

## PART II.

## Of Revealed Religion.

## SECT. I.

**C**ERTAIN Postulata, or acknowledg'd Truths. Supernatural Revelation not Superfluous, but Necessary. A Proof from the fundamental Principles of Natural Religion

## The CONTENTS.

xxv

gion and the early Deviation of Men from the Rule of Reason. Of the fittest Manner of transmitting a Divine Revelation. p. 38.

### SECT. II.

How we may be assured that a publick pretended Revelation is truly Divine. Of the Evidence of a Divine Revelation, both External and Internal. An Agreeableness to the plain Dictates of Reason the most necessary Ground of our Assent to any Revelation. How far the Judgment of Reason extends with Reference to the Proofs and Contents of a Publick Divine Revelation. The Exercise of Reason with regard to Matters of Religion the common Privilege and Duty of all who have Capacity and Opportunity. No Man or Body of Men can claim a Privilege of prescribing Infallibly to others. p. 50.

### SECT. III.

Some Consequences deduced from the Consideration of the different Abilities and Circumstances of Men, with regard to the Proofs and Contents of a Publick Divine Revelation. p. 63.

### SECT. IV.

Of the Doctrines which may be conceived to compose an extraordinary Divine Revelation. p. 67.

### SECT. V.

What Institution that pretends at present to the Authority of a Divine Revelation has a just Claim to the Proofs and Characteristicks of such a Revelation. The Jewish and Christian Revelations mutually confirm each others Pretensions. Christianity the only Publick Divine

## The CONTENTS.

Divine Revelation now entirely in Force. The unexceptionable Conveyance of the Jewish and Christian Revelations. P. 69.

## SECT. VI.

The History of the publick Revelations of the Divine Will from the Beginning of the World to the Time of Christ, containing an Answer to the Query, How came both the mentioned Revelations so late into the World?

P. 84.

## SECT. VII.

An Attempt to prove the Reasonableness of the Doctrines of Christianity. A Scheme of the Trinity and it's Dependencies. P. 89.

## SECT. VIII.

A Rational Account of the Fall of Man and it's Consequences. P. 115.

## SECT. IX.

Of the Resurrection of the same Body. P. 135.

## SECT. X.

Of Eternal Punishment. P. 141.

## SECT. XI.

The Reasonableness of certain Precepts peculiar to Christianity. Reasons which may be supposed to have inclined the Deity to subject Men to other Divine Laws besides the Laws of Nature. The Uses of Positive Precepts and the Nature of their Penalties. p. 149.

## SECT. XII.

Of certain Supplements added by the Christian Revelation to the Laws of Natural Religion. P. 157.

THE

Ecclata, Page 91, Line 28. read of One, and l. 30, r. or Quality. p. 115. l. 24. r. Rom. Ch. 5. l. 28. r. Disobedience, and l. 30. for pear r. clear.



THE  
*Christian Religion*  
FOUNDED UPON  
REASON.

---

PART I.

*Of Natural Religion.*

SECT. I.



S there are Two different PART  
Ways by which we may I.  
be supposed to arrive at  
some Knowledge of the  
Divine Nature and Will,  
viz. Either by the Exercise of our  
Natural Faculties, or by some Super-  
natural Revelation: So Religion is  
usually divided into *Natural* and *Re-  
vealed*.

By *Natural Religion*, is meant our  
Obligation to believe and practice such

B                            Things

PART Things as Reason (or the Light of I. Nature) is capable of discovering with ~~~~~ Regard to the Nature and Will of God. By *Revealed Religion*, is understood our Obligation to believe and practice such Things as may appear to have been discovered by some authentick supernatural Revelation concerning the Divine Nature and Will.

As all *Obligation* supposes some *Law*, and every Law a Dependance on some Superiour Will; so such *Obligation* as constitutes what we call *Religion* (whether *Natural* or *Revealed*) supposes a Dependance on the Laws and Will of God, (*viz.* a most Powerful, Wise, Just, Beneficent and Free Being) who Created, Preserves, and Governs the World: Of whose Existence and Perfections, we have treated elsewhere.

All *Laws* (properly speaking) as they suppose a Dependance on some Superior Will; so they suppose not only *Reason*, but *Liberty* or a Freedom of Will in their Subjects.

That Men are naturally possessed of *Reason* (or a Faculty of inferring one Thing from another), is what no Man can dispute without demonstrating it at the same time. And that they have a *Liberty* of Action in the compleatest Sbnse,

Sense, is, what they cannot but be conscious of, if they carefully reflect on what passes within their own Minds; where they may observe a certain vital Spring of Action, or a Power not only of determining their Thoughts to the Consideration of Objects with a View to Practice, but of deliberating about them, and also of suspending and varying both their Choice and Practice, without any further balancing, even after the exactest Deliberation, and truest Judgment. But Consciousness (or the inward Sensation which assures them of the Reality of such a vital Principle of Action) is as good a Proof as they can produce of the Reality, even of their Existence (or of their very Beings.) The Argument made use of to prove that Men (like certain Machines) are always necessarily determined by somewhat external, is best answered by exerting this free, internal, vital Principle, as Zeno's Argument against the Possibility of Motion was most effectually confuted by Motion.

The genuine *Dictates of Reason* are always to be reputed as declarative of the Divine Nature and Will, or as *Divine Laws*. For Reason being most fitly qualified to be a Rule of Action, and the most Wise Creator ha-

PARTING (as we may be assured) given no  
I. Qualification in vain, we may con-  
clude it was actually designed by Him  
to be such a Rule. Now, the genuine  
Dictates of Reason, being necessary  
Truths founded on the Divine Nature  
and the natural and immutable Rela-  
tions of Things (which Truths we  
may be assured were ever agreeable to  
the Divine Understanding and Will) are  
therefore called *the Laws of Na-  
ture*: And the Believing and Practi-  
sing in Conformity to those Dictates  
with a Regard to what is True and  
Right (or agreeable to the Under-  
standing and Will of God) and False and  
Wrong (or disagreeable thereto) must  
by Consequence be acting according to  
*Natural Religion.*

Our Obligation to obey the Laws  
of Nature (or any other authentick  
Discoveries of the Divine Will) is not  
founded merely on the *Power* of God,  
but chiefly on his *Beneficence* or *Good-  
ness* discoverable to us by the Benefits  
received from him. This is the more  
proper Obligation of Intelligent Beings,  
or that which is both more suitable to  
our Reasonable Nature, and gives greater  
Scope for the Exercise of Liberty.  
But as the Benefits for which we are  
obliged to the Divine Goodness are no  
less

Of Natural Religion.

less than our very Beings, and whate-<sup>PART</sup>  
ver else we enjoy, they cannot but ren-<sup>der</sup>  
der our Obligation to obey the Dictates <sup>I.</sup>  
of Reason or the Laws of Nature (since  
they are necessary and immutable) in-  
capable of Dissolution, without the Dis-  
solution of our very Beings on which  
it depends.

S E C T. II.

NOTWITHSTANDING that Reason,  
which is the immediate natural Rule of  
our Actions, is universal, yet we cannot  
find that its Dictates have been at any  
Time observed pure and unmix'd by  
any Nation or considerable Body of  
Men. For though *religious Worship* is  
a plain and very general Dictate of  
Reason, yet all Nations appear to have  
agreed that the Method of Worship  
was not to be prescribed by their own  
Reason, but by the Deity to whom it  
was address'd. So that Revelation,  
either real or pretended, seems to  
have been the Foundation of all the  
ancient Models of religious Worship.  
And whatever Sentiments were enter-  
tained by those Few who afterwards  
distinguish'd themselves by the Study  
of Philosophy, 'tis certain they usual-  
ly conformed to the religious Customs  
(however absurd or unreasonable)

PART which were established in the Countries where they lived.

So general an Inclination of Mankind to distrust their Faculties, and to depend on Extraordinary Revelation, may seem somewhat strange to such who measure every Age by the present. But whoever rightly considers the Original State of the World, will be no longer surprised at it.

'Tis not to be doubted, that the first Planters of Countries had other Employment than to retire and give themselves up to Speculation. We know that the Appetites which depend on the Body, are usually more importunate than those of the Mind, and that the strongest Bent of our Nature is that which inclines us to supply the Necessaries, and guard against the Inconveniencies of Life. We may therefore believe it was a considerable Time e'er Men would suffer themselves to be diverted from their Husbandry and the other Arts of Living to study the Art of Reasoning. This could not but tend by Degrees to a State of Barbarity: Which we need not however suppose to have at any Time prevailed so far as entirely to extinguish the Notion of a God; a Notion which they had questionless received from Tradition, and which a moderate

## Of Natural Religion.

moderate Degree of Thinking was sufficient to confirm in their Minds. But since a particular Discovery of the Nature and Will of God by the Use of Reason, was a Work of Difficulty, and therefore in those Circumstances not likely to be attempted with Success, 'tis reasonable to think, that the mere Belief of the Existence of a Being, whom they, possibly, conceived as at a Distance and regardless of humane Affairs, made but very weak Impressions on their Minds, and had little or no Influence on their Actions. Hence, we may conclude, sprung not only the Neglect of Religious Worship, but likewise the Contentions, Violence and Confusion which had so early a Growth in the World. For no Wonder if Men free from the Restraints of Religion, and unacquainted with invisible Terrors, measured Right by Power and Appetite, to the Destruction of Property, and the Disturbance of Society. To remedy these Inconveniencies by striking an universal Fear into the Minds of the ignorant unthinking Multitude, nothing, it seems, was judged so effectual as either the real or the pretended Interposition of the Deity. Accordingly, we read that the first Introducers, or Restorers, of a set-  
tled

PART tled Model of Religious Worship and

I. Civil Government frequently gave out  
that they received their Institutions  
and Laws from some Divine Being.  
Thus, tho' Fear made not the Gods,  
as the *Epicurean* Poet, without sufficient  
Reason affirmed it to have done; yet it appears to have had considerable  
Influence on the Introduction, or rather Revival of Religion and Civility  
in many Parts of the World.

But by whatever Methods the Practice of Religion was introduced, or revived, in the more early and barbarous Times, it failed not to recommend it self (in its general Notion at least) to the universal Reason of Mankind in the most polite Ages. Which is a sufficient Argument, that Nature, and not Artifice alone, had disposed Men to acknowledge and adore some Superior Being. For though all the ancient Schemes of Religion may seem to have derived their Original from some Revelation, either real or pretended, whereby either the Deity communicated his Will to his Creatures, or else the first Lawgivers of particular Nations prescribed what themselves thought most conducive to their secular and politick Ends, yet certainly there are such Things as *Natural Theology*

logy and Religion; whatever *Socinus*, PART and some of his Followers, (the better to recommend their favourite Opinion) may have pretended to the contrary. For as a Man's Reason, either by reflecting on himself, or attending to the Objects that surround him, directly leads him to the Knowledge of a God, (or most Perfect Being) so the same Reason (as we hinted) may questionless assist him to form a competent Idea of those particular Perfections of the Divine Nature, from which the Duties of *Natural Religion* may be deduced by Consequences sufficiently clear and evident.

I.

## S E C T. III.

THO' the Name of GOD, in almost every Nation, was usually no other than an honorary Title, given indifferently to whatever excelled in any Kind, yet we find it was not seldom appropriated (even by remote Antiquity) to One Eternal or Uncaused Being, to whom that and all other Names and Titles of Supreme Majesty were conceived originally and properly to belong, and who was asserted to be *the Common Father both of Gods and Men.*

Whether

**PART** Whether this Doctrine of *One Eternal*

I. *nal, or Uncaused and Independent Being*, was a pure Dictate of Reason, grounded on the Nature of the Thing, or whether it was a traditional Notion (either borrowed from the *Jews* or handed down from the first Ages of the World) may admit of Dispute. But the latter Supposition appears to have the greater Share of Probability. For tho' (as was shewn in the *Preface*) the Unity of God admits of a sufficient Proof from Reason, yet Antiquity doth not seem to have been acquainted with that Proof; nor perhaps with any other Argument that could be depended on. To this Purpose 'tis observable, that *Plato* informs us of a certain παλαιὸς λόγος, or ancient Tradition, from which he confesses that he learned much \*. And he assures us, that he had received a Tradition concerning *One Eternal Being* from the *Ancients*, who, says he, were nearer the *Gods* and more beloved than the *Greeks* †.

Of this *One Eternal Being* we find that the *Wisest* of the *Philosophers* were fully agreed to speak in the sublimest Manner possible. They ascribed to Him *Omnipotence*, *Omnipresence*, *Omniscience*,

\* Lib. III. *De Legibus.* † In *Philebo*.

Omniscience, Wisdom and Immutability, together with the Moral Perfections of the most consummate Beneficence, Justice and Providence: Which Perfections are the Foundation of all those Expressions of the deepest Veneration which are wont to come under the Nation of *Religious Worship*.

That these and all other possible Perfections cannot but belong to the One Eternal or Absolutely Necessary Being, has, 'tis hoped, been firmly demonstrated in the *Preface* and (more particularly) in the *Impartial Inquiry*.

SECT. IV.

A SETTLED Persuasion of the Eternal or Absolutely Necessary Existence of One Onely Being, whose Nature necessarily includes all Kinds and Degrees of Perfection, and who, by Consequence, was the Creator, and still is the Preserver and Governor of all other Beings, which had no necessary or eternal Existence, and whose Natures contain no necessary Perfection, cannot fail of having a very sensible Influence on the Minds of Men, by exciting not only their *Admiration*, but their *Love, Hope and Fear*. These, as far as cherished by the Will, and governed by Reason, may be rank'd among Moral

PART ral Acts, or Acts of Religion; though I. otherwise they are to be considered as merely natural Acts, (necessarily resulting from the very Constitution of our Beings. For 'tis no Object of our Choice whether we will admire a Being who so inconceivably transcends the Imperfection of our own Nature; and no Man, I am persuaded, makes it the Subject of his Deliberation, whether he shall love the most Consummate Goodness, or fear the most Impartial Justice. These Passions or Affections of the Mind as necessarily follow the firm Belief of such a Being, as the Descent of Bodies follows the Impression of Gravity. But frequently to contemplate the Divine Perfections in order to the raising and invigorating our Admiration, Love, Hope and Fear, and diligently to employ our Reason in directing and governing them, must be allowed to be the Result of Liberty and a religious Disposition of Mind.

Among the Passions or Affections which we have observed to be excited by reflecting on the transcendent Properties of the Divine Being, 'tis remarkable there is but One which immediately inclines to Speculation, *viz.* Admiration; but Three that have an immediate Influence on the Practice, *viz.*

viz. Love, Hope and Fear: The first PART of which may be said to be as the Foundation, and the two last as the Cement of practical Religion.

These Affections chiefly derive their Efficacy from our considering the Deity in a relative Capacity. For tho' the Divine Perfections considered as they are in themselves, cannot fail of exciting not only our highest Admiration, but even some Degrees of our Love and Esteem; yet they would have none, or but very little Influence on our Conduct, if not considered in Relation to us.

*Gratitude* (which is Love heighten'd by the Sense of Obligation) derived from considering the Deity with Relation to ourselves, as our Creator and Preserver, is the most noble Principle of religious Practice; and the Acts which proceed chiefly from thence, cannot but be the most acceptable, as being more free and disinterested than those which chiefly proceed from the Principles of Hope and Fear. For every Man that is inclined to do well either by Hope of Reward or Fear of Punishment, is not so forward to do so in Return for Favours or Benefits received. Somewhat of a Prospect towards future Interest, may indeed be commonly

**PART** commonly observed to lie at the Roots

J. of the Virtues; the Good that we do  
 ~ being usually with a View to future  
 Advantage, either by obtaining some  
 Benefit, or avoiding some Inconveni-  
 ence or Unhappiness: But the more our  
 Practice springs from and is influenced  
 by the Principle of Gratitude for past  
 and present Favours, the more accep-  
 table it is to our Great Benefactor; as  
 will be shewn. By Consequence, what-  
 ever Things are apt to work so strongly  
 on our Fears as to exclude the Ex-  
 ercise of Gratitude (such as Plagues,  
 Earthquakes, Thunderbolts and other  
 present Evils) would have been very  
 unfit to be made the ordinary Means  
 of exciting Men to religious Practice.

And as Gratitude is the most noble  
 Principle of religious Practice, so it is  
 the firmest Band of Civil Society;  
 which is chiefly maintained by a mutu-  
 al Sense of Benefits and Obligations.  
 Consequently, the Enemies of Reli-  
 gion (which will be made appear to  
 be our Obligation to the free and most  
 solemn Exercise of Gratitude) can be  
 no true Friends to Government.

But since Men are too apt to be-  
 come so stupid and unthinking as to  
 be very little sensible of their Obli-  
 gations both to the Author of their  
 Beings,

Beings, and to each other, it has therefore been so ordered by the Divine PART  
I. Wisdom, that the Advantages and Dis-advantages in Life, should be for the most Part so unequally shared by Good and Bad Men, as to give us (if we carefully exercise our Reason) no obscure Intimation of such a future State of equal Retribution by Rewards and Punishments, as is most fit to influence both our *Hopes* and *Fears*. These, tho' not so noble Principles, nor so acceptable to God as Gratitude, are certainly very conducive to the Interest of Mankind, by keeping such within the Bounds of Reason and Duty, whom the Sense of Divine or Humane Benefits alone is not sufficient to restrain. Such appear to be the far greater Part of Men, who, thro' Ignorance or vicious Habits, are found to be too insensible both of their natural and civil Obligations. So that we have Reason to believe, that, could the Fear of somewhat future be removed, the Bulk of Mankind (if it might be done in Consistence with their present Interests) would easily break through all other Restraints; or if they paid the Deity, or each other any Homage or Acknowledgment at all, it would be (like what the *Japoneſe* are said to allow

PART low to their *Deyro*) little more than a

I. Matter of Form and Complement.

SECT. V.

SINCE it is impossible for Creatures (whose very Beings are the Effects of the Divine Goodness) to render an Equivalent for the Benefits they receive, it follows, that the utmost Acknowledgment they can make, is, to preserve a grateful Sense of them in their Minds, and to express it by their Actions. So that Gratitude cherished in the Mind, and expressed by the Actions, is the Main of our Duty with regard to Practice; and the Principles of Hope and Fear are no otherwise effectual than as they assist Gratitude.

*Natural Religion*, considered with regard to Practice, (or the Gratitude we owe to God, according to the Prescription of Reason or the Evidence of the Light of Nature) has an immediate Respect either to God himself or to the Creatures. In the former Respect it appears to have Four principal Parts; *viz.*

Praise for Benefits received.

Prayer for Favours wanted.

Repentance for Faults committed.

Patience with regard to Penalties inflicted.

In

In the latter respect (or as it more immediately regards ourselves and our Fellow-Creatures) it hath many other ~~other~~ PART  
I. Parts, which are more peculiarly stiled *Virtues*, and which consist in a grateful Imitation of the Moral Perfections of God, *viz.* his Veracity, Justice and universal Beneficence. But these come not within the Compass of our present Design.

## S E C T. VI.

THE most immediate Expression of our Gratitude to God is *Praise*. As the inanimate Parts of the World are usually said silently to praise and glorify their Creator by the surprizing Beauties of their Composition, and the exquisite Regularity of their Motions, so the Intelligent Parts may be said to do it more peculiarly by the noble Powers and Virtues of the Mind, and the religious Conduct of Life. But this Notion of Praise, is of too great Latitude to be treated of under this particular *Section*, as comprehending the Sum of all Religion : For every religious Act is, in this improper or figurative Sense, a giving Praise or Glory to God. We shall therefore fix upon the proper Notion of it, which restrains it to the Thoughts and Words, and

C makes

PAR T makes it to consist in our always thinking and speaking most gratefully and magnificently of the Great Author of Nature. That this (and all other Acts of Religion) cannot but be very acceptable to Him, may appear from that Predominant Instinct (or Natural Principle) of Gratitude which He himself hath wrought, more or less, into the Frame and Constitution of Brute Animals. The Brutes (even of some of the most savage Kinds) have been found to be led, as it were by Nature (or rather by the God of Nature) to express their Gratitude (even with the Hazard of their own Welfare) by caring, protecting and nourishing their Benefactors. And it was not, perhaps, without some Divine Impression that all Men (however prone to Ingratitude themselves) have ever agreed to fix the blackest Marks of Infamy on the Ungrateful.

The *Epicurean* indeed, by deriving all Things from *Chance*, and excusing their Deities from any Concern with inferior Beings, and the *Stoicks*, by supposing an original Fate, have attempted, as it were, to cancel this our Natural Obligation to *Praise*. For how could we think ourselves obliged to express our Gratitude by addressing our

our Praise to any Being, though ne- P A R T  
ver so superior, if either he was so I.  
improvident as not to concern himself  
with us and our Affairs, or else so im-  
potent and void of Liberty as to do  
nothing to which he was not deter-  
mined by an external Necessity? But  
that the Principles of both these  
Sects are, in this respect, entirely un-  
philosophical, has been shewn in the  
*Enquiry*. And they have been con-  
demned by the almost unanimous Vote  
of the wiser Part of Mankind, which  
has ever been, that the Supreme Being  
could not but be most Beneficent and  
Provident, as well as Omnipotent, and,  
by Consequence, the most proper Ob-  
ject of Praise.

The *Perſian Magi*, the Disciples of  
the great *Zoroaſter*, though they affert-  
ed Two Principles, (*Oromasdes* and *A-  
rimanias*) the one of Good and the  
other of Evil; yet they held that both  
these Principles proceeded from *Zara-  
um*, who was the Beneficent Father and  
Prince of all Things.

The *Egyptians* were, 'tis said, in-  
structed by their *Hermes* (whom some  
suppose to have been the Patriarch *Jo-  
ſeph*) to worship One Supreme, most  
Beneficent, and Provident Being, who,  
in their *Hieroglyphick Character* was  
C 2 signified

PART signified by a Falcon, whose piercing  
I. Sight was thought to be no unfit Em-  
~ ~ bivonami  
blem of a Providence.

The Greeks (whatever Fables their Poets either borrowed or invented concerning the Lewdness, Thefts and Cruelties of their fictitious Deities) were generally agreed, that the Supreme God, was, *τὸς Κρείτων*, or the Best of Beings.

The Romans, instructed by Numa, believed a God who was both *Optimus & Maximus*, the Best as well as the Greatest. And the like might easily be observed of others, who all agreed in the Opinion, That the Supreme Being was the most proper Object of Praife.

And since Vice, besides its too natural Agreeableness to our depraved Inclinations, never wanted additional Charms to recommend it, therefore the most polite Nations were wont to add solemn Festivals to their publick Praises, the better to recommend the Business of Religion.

But as the Object of our Worship is Omniscent and perfectly acquainted with the most secret Springs and Motives of our Actions, it has ever been agreed by the wiser Part of Men, that neither such solemn Expressions of Praife,

Praise, nor any other outward Actions PART  
can recommend us to Him without the I.  
inward Worship of the Mind.

S E C T. VII.

Prayer, strictly taken for an humble  
Imploration of the Divine Favour and  
Assistance, springs from the same Root  
with Praise, viz. from a grateful Sense  
of past and present Benefits; it being  
the most solemn Expression of our  
Dependance on, Subjection to, and  
Trust in the Good and Provident Au-  
thor of our Beings.

That this is a Part of *Natural Religion* has ever been agreed by those who have made any Use of their Reason; such only excepted, who, with the mentioned Stoicks and Epicureans, asserted either an immutable Destiny or a blind Chance, to the Exclusion of a Providence.

That none but the Supreme and Independent Being is qualified to be the universal ultimate Object of Prayer, is too evident to admit of Dispute. Yet it has been a very general Opinion that certain inferiour Beings were qualified as particular subordinate Objects.

The Occasion of this Opinion might be the Resemblance some have fancied

PART between the Divine Majesty and that of an earthly Prince, to whom it is better Manners, as well as Policy, to address by the Mediation of his Favourites and Ministers, than by a direct and immediate Application. Or else it might proceed from a Notion which others have entertained, as if it was either impossible for the Deity, or at least inconsistent with his Repose and Happiness to attend alone to the Addresses of such Crouds of Supplicants.

However it happened, we find it to have been the almost universal Practice of the *Gentiles* to address the Deity by *Mediators*: For such were their imaginary inferior Gods and Heroes, whom they conceived to be the immediate Vicegerents of the Supreme God.

A Practice so universal would almost incline one to think it founded on some genuine Dictate of Reason. But if we reflect but never so little, we shall find it to be quite the Reverse. For to think that He who produced and sustains the World needs to be informed of any Thing that passes in it; or to suppose that He knows the Circumstances and Wants of his Creatures, and yet to imagine that He himself wants the Assistance of others as Dispensers of his Benefits; or lastly, to fancy him to be naturally

turally inaccessible to an humble Sup- P A R T  
plicant without the Ceremony of an I.  
Introducer, is plainly to form a very  
wrong and degrading Idea of the Best  
as well as Greatest of Beings.

Whether there may not have been  
some particular Motives of sufficient  
Weight to incline the Deity to consti-  
tute a *Mediator*, is a Question of ano-  
ther Kind. Yet this, at least, is cer-  
tain, that to address him by one or  
more Mediators without his Warrant  
and Institution, was a very rash and un-  
justifiable Practice, and that it natural-  
ly led the *Pagans* to what I conceive to  
have been the most criminal Part of  
their Idolatry, I mean, the *worshipping*  
*and serving the Creature more than the*  
*Creator*: And whether the same Prac-  
tice may be less rash, or in any respect  
more justifiable in some who call them-  
selves *Christians*, is not perhaps very  
difficult to determine.

As for the Circumstances of the Duty  
of *Prayer*; 'tis in the first place, an  
undoubted Dictate of Reason, that as  
our Dependance on God is continual,  
and our Subjection to him entire, and  
without Reserve, so we ought ever to  
be ready to acknowledge this our De-  
pendance and Subjection by frequent

PART and most humble Addresses for the Supply of our Wants.

Though every Moment of Life is a new Debt contracted to the Preserver of our Beings, yet we need not fear swelling the Accompt, or increasing the Obligation, by our most frequent and importunate Addresses. For certainly, the Deity, who is the Chief Good, cannot but be most ready to communicate his Favours to the Humble and Grateful. The Kind Author of Nature, like an indulgent Parent, we may be assured is ever inclined to shew new Tokens of his Affection to his Off-spring. For his placing us in so well-furnished a World, is alone sufficient to convince us of his Willingness to bestow upon us whatever is necessary to our Comfort and Happiness.

But as we are too apt to mistake what is prejudicial, for what is necessary or convenient, Reason dictates that our Addresses should be with the most entire Submission to the Divine Will. This is no more than the Homage that is naturally due to the Sovereign of the World; and the Consequence of it would be Contentment in every Condition and Circumstance of Life: Whereby we should effectually gain that real Happiness, which we might too

too often fail of in case our Petitions ~~for the sake of~~ were always granted. PART  
I.

Again, Since Men are united in Society, and on that Account, are engaged to implore Benefits of a publick Nature; and since particular Persons are too apt to be remiss and negligent even in petitioning for the Divine Blessings on themselves in a private Capacity; 'tis therefore an undoubted Dictate of Reason, that Times, Places and Persons be set a-part, with all Decency, for the more publick and solemn Exercise of this and other Duties, as well as for publick Instruction and Exhortation to all the Parts of a religious Life. Such has been the Custom of all Nations that had not quite divested themselves of Humanity. For religious Society and Government have, in almost every Country, been of equal Antiquity with the Political.

*Lastly*, Reason dictates that our Addresses to God, both publick and private, be performed not only with the most humble, reverent and submissive Disposition of Mind, but with what is reputed the most decent Posture of the Body. 'Tis the former indeed which is chiefly to be regarded, and particular Circumstances may frequently alter the

PART the Case as to the latter. But in the ge-

I. neral, 'tis demonstrable, that the decent  
Posture of the Body is not to be neg-  
lected; for as much as God may justly  
require all the Tokens of Reverence,  
of what Kind soever that we are capa-  
ble of. Which Tokens of Reverence  
are more especially requisite in the  
publick Exercise of this Duty of Reli-  
gion: On which Occasion, if ever, it  
ought to be our particular Concern to  
be not only acceptable to God, but  
beneficial to our Fellow-Creatures;  
whose Piety is by nothing so apt to  
be excited as by the visible Tokens of  
it in others.

To this Part of *Natural Religion*  
may be reduced the Customs of solemn  
Swearing and Vowing, or otherwise  
invoking the Name of God. For tho'  
their End is Civil or Political, *viz.* ei-  
ther for confirming a Contract or de-  
termining a Controversy; yet in them-  
selves considered, they are, if duly  
performed, religious Acts, being seri-  
ous Professions of our Belief of the  
Divine Omnipotence, Providence and  
Justice.

It has ever been the Custom of the  
most Civilized Nations to swear by  
their Gods; and such an Oath has al-  
ways been esteemed Sacred and invio-  
lable

lable. The Design of its first Introduction was evidently the Good of Society. For since the Eye of the Magistrate could not reach every Action, nor the Hand of Justice take hold of every Offender, 'twas therefore necessary that the Tribunal of Conscience should supply the Defect of that of the Civil Government. Some particular *Sects* indeed (I mean the *Pelagians* and our modern *Quakers*) have absolutely condemned the Practice of Swearing in any Case. But they are easily confuted both from the Nature and End of an Oath, which evidently prove that Swearing, when rightly performed, is (as we before observed) not only an Act of Homage to God, but a Benefit to Society.

**S E C T. VIII.**

ANOTHER Duty of Religion, as it immediately regards God, which is discoverable by the Light of Nature, is *Repentance*: A Duty acknowledged in all Ages, and (till of late) by all *Nations* and *Sects*, who had any Sense of their Dependance on, and Subjection to the Deity. Indeed, the Opinions of some of the *Epicureans*, who had in Effect levelled themselves with the *Brutes*, and of the *Stoicks*, who attempted to mount above the Condition of

PART of Human Nature, were the wide Extremes which met at last in Denying the Necessity of Repentance. Those of the latter Sect excluded Repentance in Consequence of their Opinion of *Apathie*; which made the Perfection of Man to consist in a Freedom from Sorrow and all other Passions: Though at the same time they allowed of condemning one's self for evil Actions. But what was it less than perversely to set themselves against the Bent of our Nature, when they would have us to condemn and be displeased with ourselves without Sorrow?

*Repentance*, or a hearty Sorrow for and Confession of our Faults, proceeding from a grateful Sense of formerly abused Favours, joyned with a sincere Resolution and Endeavour of future Gratitude and Obedience, is the least Acknowledgment (though the greatest and most valuable we can make) to the offended Author of our Beings.

How far Reason assisted the wisest of the Heathens in making a Judgment of it's Nature and Efficacy, may appear from the following Remarks.

1.) A moderate Degree of Thinking was sufficient to assure them that the End of God in producing and furnishing

ing Men with natural Powers or Principles of Action was not his own Benefit or Advantage, but their Happiness. He ~~wanted~~ wanted no Accession to his Glory; nor could he receive any. Our doing that from whence, in the usual improper or figurative Way of Speaking, Glory is said to accrue to him, is truly and properly nothing else but the pursuing our own highest Interest and Happiness. His Glory sufficiently manifests itself without our Services; and to think that any Thing that we can do or suffer can really manifest it yet more, is more unreasonable than to imagine that the Reflection of a Ray can enlighten the Sun. And had the Divine Glory (or Perfection) never manifested itself by the Creation of Man, or even the Universe, 'tis certain that the Divine Happiness would have been eternally and immutably the same.

2.) Since God's End in governing us cannot but be the same that He proposed to himself in creating us, it seems that they considered him (when they reasoned concerning the Efficacy of *Repentance*) not only as the most Beneficent Author of their Beings, but as a most Wise and Just Governour. In the former Notion they regarded him as intending the Happiness of Mankind

PART kind as his End, in the latter, as pursuing that End by employing and encouraging the most proper Means in order to obtain it.

3.) Since the Government of Reasonable Beings, furnished with a Power of Determining their Actions, cannot but be exercised by the most Wise as well as Beneficent Lord of the World in such Manner as is most agreeable to their particular Natures, they concluded that their Supreme Happiness could not but be suspended by him on their acting according to Reason; as also that the Means of attaining the End of his Government, (viz. their Happiness) could not but be of such a Nature as most effectually tended to incline them to submit to Reason as the Rule of their Conduct, in Consistence with their native Freedom of Action.

4.) These Means appeared to them to be of two Sorts, viz. Rewards and Punishments: The former of which are qualified to work on our Hopes, the latter on our Fears, the two main Springs of Action in the Generality of Men.

5.) They concluded it to be most Fit, and therefore most Just, both that those who refused to accept their Supreme Happiness as the Reward of reasonable

or

or virtuous Actions, should be excluded from it; and that those who did in effect set a Value on Misery by choosing Vice, which naturally and evidently tends to it, should be made directly miserable.

6.) Consequently, since it was manifest by the Course of Things that Rewards and Punishments were not finally distributed in the present State, (which appeared to be a State of Trial) it was obvious to infer from the Justice of God, that they were chiefly reserved to a future State.

7.) As nothing can ordinarily qualify for the Rewards of the future State (or our supreme Happiness) but Perseverance in a Reasonable or Virtuous Course, so it seem to them to follow that nothing could expose Men to the Punishments of that State but Obstinacy in a Course of Vice or unreasonable Opposition to the Divine Will.

8.) Consequently, as a virtuous Man declining from the Paths of Virtue, or deviating from the Rule of Reason, by becoming obstinately and incorrigibly Vicious, could not but forfeit his Reward, so, perhaps, it seemed equally reasonable to conclude, that a vicious Person repenting of his past Offences, and sincerely betaking himself to, and per-

PART persevering in a Course of virtuous Actions, should escape the Penalty due to his former Rebellions. For as the declining from a virtuous to a vicious Course renders us obnoxious to the Tokens of Divine Displeasure, so no Reason could perhaps be assigned by those who had no Notion of a plenary Satisfaction for Sin, why repenting and returning to a Course of Virtue should not be sufficient to qualify for the Divine Favour.

As for the absolutely infinite Guilt or Demerit of Sin, derived from its being committed against an absolutely Infinite Object, it doth not appear that the Philosophers had the least Notion of it, any more than the Apostles and primitive *Christian* Fathers. For though many of the *Gentiles* supposed the immediate Infliction of an infinite (or eternal) positive Punishment, yet they supposed it only in Case of the most flagitious Crimes (such as the Rape of *Proserpine*, or the War of the Giants †) whereas had they founded it on the infinite Demerit of Sin, as derived from the absolute Infinity of its Object, they must (if they talk'd consistently) have supposed it in every Case: For as much

† Vide Virg. *Aeneid.* 6.

as all Sins, having the same Infinite PART Object, must have been supposed to have had the same infinite Demerit.

I.

On the contrary, it appears that they made their Estimate of the Demerit of Sin, not so much from the Dignity of the Object or Party offended, as from the Nature and Circumstances of the Subject or offending Party. They were of Opinion (if we except the Stoicks, who made all Sins equal, though not infinite) that greater or lesser Degrees either of Knowledge or Obstinacy in the Offender, rendered the Demerit of his Offence greater or less in Proportion. But no room is left to suppose greater or lesser Degrees of Demerit, if the Demerit of all Sins be absolutely infinite or equal.

Thus much may be sufficient as to the Efficacy of *Repentance*, according to the Prospect that was yielded to the *Gentiles* by the Light of Nature or Reason.

Reason, if duly attended to, will instruct us, that though Sorrow for Sin is a necessary Condition of Pardon, yet it is not, in itself, pleasing to God, but only as it prepares the Way to Amendment of Life. The Best of Beings cannot take Delight in the Sorrow

D

row

PART now and Misery of his Creatures. A-

~ I. ~ amendment is therefore the most des-  
sential Part of our Duty in Case of Of-  
fence, and if the Offence be Wronging  
or Injuring our Fellow-Creatures, Re-  
stitution or Reparation to them, where  
there is Ability, is a necessary Step to-  
wards Amendment, as well as Con-  
fession to the offended Deity.

Reason will likewise instruct us,  
that Repentance and Amendment are  
(above all other Acts of Religion) most  
acceptable to God when they proceed  
chiefly from a Principle of Gratitude to  
him, and an Aversion to what is con-  
trary to his Will; and not merely from  
the Fear of Punishment or the Hope of  
Reward. 'Tis the Freedom of any  
Act which renders it virtuous and com-  
mendable. When we repent and am-  
end our Lives chiefly through Fear  
of Punishment or Hope of Reward, we  
do little else but follow the strong-  
est Bent of our Nature. 'Tis much  
like the lifting up our Arms to ward  
off a Blow, or the stretching out  
our Hands to receive a Gift; which  
Actions though not altogether neces-  
sary yet admit but of a small Degree  
of Freedom. But when Repentance  
and Amendment of Life proceed prin-  
cipally from a grateful Sense of for-  
mer

merly abused Favours, and an Aversion PART to future Ingratitude, we act with I. greater Liberty. For though we have ~~the~~ somewhat of a Disposition to Gratitude, yet (as was elsewhere observed) it is not usually so strong as either our Fear of Misery or our Hope of Happiness.

## SECT. IX.

PATIENCE, is another Part of *Natural Religion* as it immediately regards God. This, though a Duty not easily practised, is yet very easily demonstrated. For as it cannot be doubted that we owe the Author of our Beings as complete Obedience as is in our Power; so 'tis certain, that our Obedience to Him is not complete, unless it be Passive as well as Active.

*Patience* is here taken in the largest Sense, as signifying an entire, habitual Submission and Resignation to the Will of God, proceeding from the Knowledge of our own Demerit, and a grateful Sense of and Confidence in his Wisdom and Lenity in the Government of the World.

If the supreme Government of the World be in the Direction of an Omnipotent and Omniscent Being, 'tis most certain that no Inconvenience can befall us but what is either infi-

PART ted, or, at least, permitted, by him.

I. And if the Supreme Governour be likewise a most Beneficent and Provident Being, 'tis as certain that nothing of that Kind is either inflicted or permitted, in the present State, but what either actually tends, or is capable of tending, to our Advantage and Happiness. Which Reflections yield a solid Foundation of Patience or Resignation to his Will.

Yet Patience doth not include a *Stoical Apathie*, or an entire Freedom from all Passions; but only an habitual Endeavour to bridle and govern them according to the Rule of right Reason. Though the Passions are neither morally Good nor Evil in themselves, yet under the Direction of Reason, they are as the Wings whereby the Mind either pursues what is Good or flies from what is Evil. So that to seek to divest ourselves of them would be so far from tending to the perfecting of our Nature, that were it to be effected, it would render us less perfect and less capable of Religion than before. The Passions of Love, Hope and Fear, we have observed to be the immediate Principles of religious Practice. This is their natural Effect; and if they sometimes produce Effects that are contrary

cotnrary, these are to be looked upon PART as monstrous or unnatural. If the I. Passions are sometimes Rebels and Opposers of the Government of Reason, yet at other times, they most effectually support it. If they often prove the Betrayers of the Cause of Virtue, they are, at other times, her faithful Guardians. If they sometimes hurry us from the Path of Happiness, 'tis for Want either of a greater Degree of Knowledge to direct, or of Resolution to restrain and moderate them. But to furnish the most effectual Supplies for both these Wants, by clearer Discoveries of the Evil of Vice, and the Method of Pardon, and by more powerful Motives to the Practice of Virtue, will appear to be the chief Design of *Revelation.*





THE  
*Christian Religion*  
 FOUNDED UPON  
 R E A S O N.

PART II.

*Of Revealed Religion.*

SECT. I.

PART  
II.



THE following *Propositions* are either so evident in themselves, or so evidently deducible from the Principles established in the Former Essay, that they may, it is conceived, be premised here, as Truths not likely to be disputed by the Assertors of *Natural Religion*.

1.) *The proper Happiness of every Species of Beings was attainable by, and connected with, the right Exercise of such*

such Natural Powers or Faculties as PART were bestowed by the Beneficent Creator of the World; for the not using, or abusing of which, Intelligent Beings both were and are, more or less accountable to Him.

2.) We are not to suppose any supernatural or extraordinary Assistance without assigning such Reasons for it as may suit with the Wisdom, as well as the Beneficence, of the Great Creator.

3.) A supernatural or extraordinary Assistance, whenever to be supposed, cannot (in a State of Probation or Trial) be conceiv'd to be of such a Kind as entirely and universally to render useless the natural Faculties of the Beings to whom it is communicated or imparted.

4.) 'Tis a necessary Property of the most powerful, wisest and best of Beings ever to do what is really most fit with regard to the Attainment of his most Beneficent Ends, in consistence with the proper Use of the Faculties of his Intelligent Creatures in general.

If we apply these Principles to the Case of a Divine Revelation to Men, it will be evident, that this, being a Sort of supernatural or extraordinary Assistance, is only to be supposed on the following Grounds.

PART I.) That it is not superfluous, but  
II. imparted for Reasons worthy of the Wis-  
dom and Goodness of God, and condu-  
cive to the Happiness of Men.

2.) That it doth not render useless the  
natural Powers or Faculties of Men, by  
entirely and universally preventing their  
due Exercise.

That an extraordinary or superna-  
tural Revelation of the Divine Will  
to Men was far from being super-  
fluous, may appear from the follow-  
ing Reflections, which are the funda-  
mental Principles by which the  
Practice of Natural Religion must be  
allowed to be supported.

We cannot doubt that the Creator of  
all Things had an original, independent  
Right of ordaining and qualifying his  
Creatures for such particular Ends as  
were judged Fit by his most perfect  
Wisdom.

We may be assured from the Consi-  
deration of his most perfect Wisdom,  
that as the Nature and Capacity of  
every Creature were suited to it's End,  
so his Government of the respective Cre-  
atures for the better attaining their  
particular Ends, is ordinarily suited to  
their several Natures and Capacities.

Men in particular, being furnish'd  
with natural Powers or Principles of  
Action,

Action, joyn'd with Liberty, we may PART conclude were designed for Liberty of II. Action; and consequently, the Divine Government of Men (at least in a State of Trial) must be ordinarily consistent with the free Exercise of their natural Powers.

This Action for which Men were designed, was questionless ordain'd by God for some ultimate End which was worthy his Wisdom and Goodness.

That End could not be any Advantage of his own (since he was indigent of Nothing) but the Happiness of Men; which is chiefly reserv'd to a Future State, and ordinarily connected with the proper Use of their Faculties in the present State; which is a State of Trial.

Every Action tending to a particular End must be directed by some Rule or other.

The immediate necessary Rule of Men's Actions is their Reason.

Whatever is design'd by the most perfect Wisdom to be a necessary or perpetual Rule, must be steady and uniform.

Reason therefore, when duly exercis'd, about Objects of which we have clear and distinct Ideas, is not an uncertain Guide, but proceeds upon necessary, immutable, uniform Principles.

Nothing

PART II. *Nothing is immutable but the Divine Nature and Essential Will, and such Truths as are immediately founded on that most perfect Nature and Will.*

*Reason was therefore capable of attaining a sufficient Information of the Divine Nature and of the Divine Essential Will.*

*Reason was no otherwise design'd to be the Rule of Men's Practice, than as declarative of the Nature and Will of God with regard to practical Truths.*

*Whatever Reason plainly discovers to be agreeable to the Divine Nature and Will, is right (and therefore good) conducive to our chief Happiness, and the Matter of our Duty.*

*Whatever it declares to be otherwise is wrong (and therefore evil) inconsistent with our chief Happiness, and to be avoided, not only as most prejudicial to ourselves, but as most offensive to our great Benefactor and Lawgiver.*

*In order to the more effectual pursuing what is good (or right or agreeable to the Divine Nature and Will) and avoiding what is evil (or wrong or disagreeable thereto) Men were furnished with natural Appetites or Passions (which were designed to be the Assistants and Subjects of Reason) as well as*

as with *Liberty* or a complete *Freedom of Will*, consisting in a Power of *Acting* or not *Acting* according to their *Institution*: Which Sort of *Liberty* tho' it is not a *Perfection* in every *Case*, yet it is a *requisite Qualification* in every *Being* who is in a *State of Trial*.

A *State of Trial*, in some manner or other, was necessary, as being a necessary Result of the Relation between the most *Wise* as well as *Beneficent Creator* and his *intelligent Creatures*, and of the *Obligation to Obedience* arising immediately from thence, without any previous *Contract*.

Thus stood the *Case* between the Great Creator and the Humane Species. Had Men duly exercised their *Liberty*, and govern'd their *Appetites* and *Actions*, by the *Rule of Reason* in *Obedience* to the Creator's *Will*, no doubt they had been happy. But we have *Histories* sufficient to convince us, that *there* has been a very early *Deviation* from that *Rule*. The *Passions*, tho' design'd to be the *Subjects and Assistants of Reason*, soon became *Rebels and Usurpers*. So that Men, for the most part, being as it were, blindly driven by the *Force of ungoverned Appetites*, disobeyed the *Laws of the most Beneficent Creator*

by.

PART by pursuing either some lesser good  
 II. or some evil disguised under the specious Appearance of good, instead of their chief Happiness. And this Disease of our rational Nature spreading like a Contagion, the Case of the succeeding Ages became still more deplorable. Evil Examples and Prejudices added new Force to the prevailing Passions, and Reason and Liberty of Will, for want of due Exercise, still became weaker and less able to regain their lost Dominion. Of this so general a Corruption the Wisest of the *Pagan Philosophers* \* and Lawgivers were very sensible. These partly expressed their Desires and Expectations of some extraordinary Remedy, and partly made use of the Pretence, endeavouring to persuade vicious, but ignorant and credulous Men that they acted by the Commission, and taught by the Inspiration of the Gods. And indeed even the bare Pretence of Divine Revelation appears to have had much more extensive Effects than the abstracted Reasonings, and even the wisest Precepts, of mere Philosophy. But those Effects were not so durable as extensive. The Pretence of

Divine

\* Vid. Plat. de Repub. Lib. 6. & in Alcibiade 2.

Divine Revelation, without sufficient PART  
Evidence to support it, was soon treat- II.  
ed with Contempt; and so far were men  
Men from learning Virtue from those  
pretended Messengers of the Gods, that  
in many Places, they even deified  
Vice and fathered their own Impie-  
ties on the Gods themselves.

In this Case especially, it is not to be  
conceived that the True God, the most  
Provident and Beneficent of Beings,  
would long sit as an idle Spectator,  
without interposing by such a Reve-  
lation of his Will as might, thro' it's  
convincing Evidence and awful Au-  
thority, be a more effectual Remedy  
for those Evils than unassisted Rea-  
son could have been. That he has  
actually thus interposed we have far  
less Room to doubt than we have to  
doubt of an affectionate Father's in-  
terposing, by his Advice and Autho-  
rity, to prevent the self-destructive Ef-  
fects of the culpable Ignorance and  
Folly of his Offspring.

This way of arguing, I conceive,  
no Man who believes a Providence,  
can refuse to come into. Some I e-  
ven apprehend will be ready to pro-  
ceed farther, by supposing it would  
have been much more fit for the com-  
mon Father of Mankind to interpose  
not

ARRT not only by the Declaration of his Will but by the Exertion of his Power, in such manner as infallibly to have prevented so great a Degeneracy. But this Supposition is contrary to the most perfect Wisdom of the Divine Government, which demonstrates it to be most fit for the Deity to act with Reference to his Creatures in a manner suitable to their Natures, States and Capacities: Which Manner of acting cannot consist (in a State of Trial) with universally preventing the Exercise of the completest Liberty. Whereas, in granting such a Revelation of his Will, together with such other sufficient Assurances as consisted with the natural Use of their Faculties, the Goodness of God towards Mankind, (in the mentioned Case,) was as great as could possibly consist with his most Perfect Wisdom. Any thing that was, Universally, either more or less than this, would have been inconsistent either with his most perfect Wisdom, on the one hand, or with his most Perfect Goodness on the other. And consequently, nothing could be so fit, and therefore so necessary, to that Being whose necessary Perfection it is ever to do what is fittest with a View to the Attainment

ment of his most wise and beneficent PART  
Ends. For tho' we are not, in every Case, qualified to judge of what is fittest, and by Consequence necessary, with regard to the Divine Being, yet in this Case, (which was plainly very different from the Case of the Beings known by the Name of Angels) we certainly are.

As to the Manner of communicating such a Divine Revelation, 'tis plain that it must have been either immediate, to every Man (viz. by a distinct Inspiration) or else intermediate, by the Means of Tradition (either Oral or Scriptural) derived from one or more Men.

An immediate Revelation of the Divine Will to every Man would have been subject to the following Inconveniences. Either, in the first Place, it must have carried with it so much Internal Light or Evidence as not to have suffered Men to doubt of the Truth of it; and so it would have universally prevented the proper Use of their Rational Faculties, and by consequence, it would have been inconsistent with the Nature of the Divine Government, which, as we have observ'd, cannot (in the present State of Trial) be supposed universally to render

**PART** II. render useless the natural Faculties of it's Subjects; (the like to which may be said of any universal supernatural Conviction of the Truth of a Revelation already made to others, thro' any strong Impressions independent on rational Evidence) or else their Belief of it must have depended on some external Proofs, such as Miracles or Prophecies. But if either of these Proofs had been made use of for the Satisfaction of every particular Person, in every Age, as to the Truth of his particular Revelation, they would not have been regarded as any thing extraordinary, and would perhaps have made no more Impression on the Minds of Men than the common Events and Appearances of Nature. Besides, Miracles, in this Case, would have been such a perpetual Force on the Constitution of the World, as must have produced an endless Disorder, and have greatly impeach'd the Wisdom of the supreme Governour.

It therefore follows, that the traditional Way of communicating an extraordinary Revelation of the Divine Will, was the most suitable both to the Wisdom of God and to the State and Capacities of Men. And whereas there are two Sorts of Tradition,  
*viz.*

viz. either Oral (by word of Mouth) PART or Scriptural (by Writing) 'tis evident that, since the commonly supposed Reduction or Shortening of the Term of humane Life, the latter Way (viz. that which is scriptural) is preferable. In this Method of communicating the most useful Knowledge the wisest Nations have generally agreed. The *Chinese* have the Writings of their *Confutius*. The *Egyptians* had their Hieroglyphicks, and the *Romans* their *Sybilline Books*, and the twelve Tables of their Laws. And as for such who (since the mentioned Period) have made use of Oral Tradition for transmitting any Body of Laws or Doctrines to future Ages, either they have been so unpolish'd as to want the Art of Writing (as the *Americans*) or they have had the Intention to confine the Benefit of their Laws and Institutions to themselves (as the *Brachmans*) or else they have had another politick End to serve (as the less ancient *Jews* and *Romanists*) viz. to secure to themselves the Power of imposing on the Ignorance and Credulity of Men.

And as it is reasonable to suppose that a Revelation of such Importance to Mankind should be committed to

E writing,

PART writing, not only for its Preservation,  
II. but likewise for the more effectually  
preventing of Imposture, so 'tis no less  
reasonable to think that the Divine  
Providence would be peculiarly con-  
cern'd to keep it so pure and entire  
(with regard, at least, to Matters of  
considerable Importance) as that it  
might always remain a sufficient Rule  
of Faith and Practice.

## S E C T. II.

THE Reasons which have induced  
us to conclude that there is actually in  
the World some sufficient scriptural  
Revelation of the Divine Will, cannot  
but be allow'd their Weight by such  
who acknowledge a Providence. But  
the great Question is, How we may be  
assured that any particular pretended  
Revelation is that sufficient Revelation.  
Here we may doubtless lay it down  
as an indisputable Principle, That a  
Revelation which is truly Divine must  
be attended with so much Evidence, at  
least, as is sufficient to yield Satisfac-  
tion to every fair and impartial Enquirer.  
This Principle is an immediate Infe-  
rence from the Nature of the Divine  
Government, which (as we observ'd)  
cannot but be (ordinarily) suited to the  
States and Capacities of it's Subjects;  
and

## Of Revealed Religion.

52

and which, by consequence, I must (at PART least in a State of Trial) admit of the proper Use of all their natural Faculties; and likewise from the Nature of such a Revelation which, being of the last Importance, cannot but require sufficient Evidence.

Let us therefore consider what Evidence we may reasonably expect in a Matter of this Kind.

Tho' such an universal *internal* Evidence as, by it's Clearness, may be supposed entirely to prevent the Exercise of Reason, and so to render useless the principal Power or Faculty of Men, would be irreconcileable to the Wisdom of the Divine Government (at least in the Present State, which we have the greatest Reasons to think is a State of Trial; which State supposes our future Happiness or Unhappiness to depend on the good or ill Use of our natural Powers or Faculties) yet doubtless we may expect to find any other Evidence, whether external or internal, which the Use of our natural Faculties both admits of and requires.

We may doubtless expect such *internal* Evidence as consists in the Reasonableness of the whole Revelation, and the visible Agreement of all it's most important Parts. And, because this

PART internal Evidence could not, alone, amount to a sufficient Proof, 'tis therefore reasonable to conclude that some external Proofs should be added which might most powerfully strike and most sensibly affect the Minds of Men.

These Proofs we may suppose to be of two Sorts,

1.) Such as were most proper to convince those who lived at the Time of it's first Promulgation: Such as the fulfilling of ancient Prophecies (if any such there were) in the Person or Persons who publish'd it, their unblameable Lives, their Courage and Constancy in suffering (as Occasion offer'd) to confirm the Truth of their Testimony, their Miracles (or the Production of Effects above their proper natural Powers) and their Prophecies of such near Events as depended not on the settled Course of natural Causes.

2.) Such as were most fit to convince those who should live in succeeding Ages: Such as the Conveyance both of the Revelation itself and of the History of the mention'd external Proofs of it's Divine Original in the most unexceptionable Manner, and likewise the gradual Accomplishment of absolute Prophecies of remote Events.

When

When we are convinc'd that all these P A R T  
Proofs, both external and internal, con- III.  
cur, (as we shall undertake to prove  
they do with regard to *Christianity*)  
then we have, perhaps, the utmost  
rational Evidence that a Matter of this  
Nature can be supposed to be capable  
of: Upon which, as being, in all re-  
spects abundantly sufficient, 'tis cer-  
tainly most reasonable to depend. For  
if Veracity and Providence are to be  
ascribed to the Divine Being, we may  
be assured, that all these Proofs or  
Characters of an extraordinary Revela-  
tion of the Divine Will shall never be  
permitted to agree to any Imposture:  
It being absolutely inconsistent with  
the Supposition of a most veracious  
and provident Being to imagine he  
should either cause or permit us, (espe-  
cially in this Affair) to be reduced to  
such a Case as not to act reasonably un-  
less we give our Assent to a Lie.

It must indeed be confess'd, that  
there is scarce any one of the mention-  
ed *external* Proofs or Characters which  
hath not serv'd, at some Time or other,  
to recommend Doctrines which were  
far from being Divine. Not only *Judaism* and *Christianity*, but even *Poly-  
theism* and *Atheism*, have had their  
*Martyrs*. Not only the *Old* and *New*

PART Testament Prophets have foretold future Events, but the pretended *Oracles* of the Pagans have sometimes done the same. Not only *Jesus* and *Moses*, but the *Egyptian Sorcerers*, *Simon Magus* and even *Apollonius Tyaneus* and others (if we may give Credit to *Pagan Historians*) have done strange and unaccountable Things. Tho', I think, it must likewise be confess'd, that the Miracles ascribed to *Jesus* seem to argue such an universal Dominion over the Works of Nature, that if literally true (as they must be if *Jesus* be, what we shall prove him to be, the promised *Messias*, one of whose Characters it was to work Miracles) their single Evidence could not but be next to irresistible.

It seems, however, that neither any of the mention'd external Proofs or Characters, nor all of them together, ought absolutely to determine our Assent, without a due Regard to that one *internal Character*, viz. the Reasonableness of the Revelation itself, or it's Agreeableness to our clear Conceptions of the Divine Nature and the immutable Relations of Things. This alone is sufficient to assure us that a Revelation is, at least, agreeable to the Will of God (forasmuch as his Nature and Will are ever agreeable to each other)

tho'

tho' not to prove it to be an extraordinary Discovery of that Will. But any of the other Characters (and even all of them) without this, may, for ought we can be assured, agree to an Imposture. For that both unreasonable and pernicious Doctrines have been sometimes suffer'd (as a Punishment for the Neglect and Abuse of Reason) to appear in the specious Disguise of Truth, is what cannot be denied. Besides, every Man cannot have the Opportunity to be sufficiently inform'd and duly affected with the external Characters or Proofs of a Revelation, and no Man (as will be made appear) can be under an immediate Obligation to believe without a Possibility of sufficient Information. But every Man, who has the right Use of his Faculties, join'd with their due Exercise, can perceive whether a Revelation (in it's main Scope or Design at least) is agreeable to Reason.

Tho', perhaps, we know not precisely where to fix the Limits of the natural Power or Skill of Agents, with regard to *Miracles*, nor can infallibly determine how far either Chance or Cunning may have sometimes contributed to the fulfilling of *Predictions*, nor how far it may have consisted with the Wisdom and

**PART** Goodness of God, in some Cases, to permit the Delusions of ill-designing Men or other intelligent Beings, yet of this we are infallibly assured, that having furnished us with Powers or Faculties sufficient to qualify us for the Practice of Religion (or a reasonable and free Obedience to his Will) He has likewise enabled us to judge of the Reasonableness, at least, of any pretended Revelation of that Will; and that, if we neglect to employ the Powers or Faculties he has given us, the Delusion will be principally owing to ourselves. God, we know, has likewise given us Sight and Taste and other Senses to distinguish what is either Beneficial or Destructive to the Constitutions of our Bodies; but if we stupidly or perversely neglect to make Use of them, we can have no sufficient Grounds to expect the Divine Power should exert itself to prevent the Consequences. Now, we all know, that what the Sight, the Taste and the other Senses are to the Body, that Reason is to the Mind. And therefore, as our outward Senses, though not capable of perceiving every Thing, are, when exercised about their proper Objects, sufficient, in all ordinary Cases, to inform us of what is prejudicial to our Bodies,

Bodies, so our Reason, though not capable of working without Ideas, yet if duly improved and exercised about Objects of which we have clear and distinct Ideas, is (as we may be assured) sufficient to guard against those Errors which are hurtful to the Mind.

But though our Reason should meet with some considerable Difficulties in a Revelation that has all the external Characters of one that is truly Divine; we are not therefore to reject it, unless the Difficulties necessarily include in them a Contradiction, or somewhat that is plainly contrary to our clear Perception of the Agreement or Disagreement of our Ideas. For as we do not therefore deny the Material Universe to be the Work of God because of some *Phænomena* which we cannot clearly comprehend, so neither ought we to deny a Revelation, thus attested, to be the Word of God, merely on account of some Difficulties which we cannot explain. In this Case Reason will direct us rather to imitate the diligent Enquirers into the Abstrusities of Nature, and vigorously to exert ourselves in framing Hypotheses to solve those Difficulties, at least so far as to remove any Appearance

PART of an Inconsistency or Contradiction.

II. ~~W~~ For, if we know any thing, we know and are assured, that as nothing that is inconsistent or contradictory is included in the Divine Nature, so the Divine Power doth not extend to Contradictions. Though Almighty Power can do every Thing (and even create Something where there was Nothing) yet a Contradiction, (which is inconsistent and destroys itself, by importing that it is and is not at the same Time and in the same Sense) being a pure Nothing, cannot be made or created by any Power, as being no Object of Power.

From what has been observed, we may draw this Conclusion, That it is a great Inconsistency or Contradiction for Men to yield Assent to any Doctrine on Supposition of its being Divinely revealed, if it be plainly contradictory to Reason, when the chief Ground of our Assent to any Revelation as Divine must be its *Reasonableness*.

But here arises another Question, *viz.* How far the Judgment of Reason extends with Reference both to the Proofs and Contents of such a Revelation? To which, I conceiye, we may reply,

1.) 'Tis

1.) 'Tis certainly the Priviledge of P. A. R. T. Reason to enquire both into the History and Nature of the external Proofs. II.

2.) No doubt but it is likewise the Privilege of Reason to judge concerning the Genius of the Language, the Nature of the Style, and the Propriety and Connection of the Terms or Words in which the Revelation is made. Otherwise we could not be capable of distinguishing between what is proper and what is figurative in Matters of Faith, or between what is absolute and what is conditional in Matters of Practice.

3.) 'Tis no less the Privilege of Reason to judge of the Truth, Consistence, and Connection of the Ideas signified by the Terms or Words. Otherwise we could be under no Obligation either to believe or practice what appears to result by the clearest Consequence from the Matters which are expressly revealed. Otherwise we could not be sufficiently guarded against Enthusiasm. For tho' it is very agreeable to our Notion of the most Perfect Wisdom to suppose something sublime and astonishing in a Revelation that proceeds from God, yet we cannot suppose him to have inserted either such Ambiguities as were some of the *Pagan Oracles*

(whose

PART (whose true Sense could not possibly be unriddl'd) or senseless Jargon, as are the Mysteries of the Rosicrucians and Behmenists. For neither of these could be with any better Design than to delude our most sincere Endeavours, and to mislead and bewilder that very Reason which himself has given us for a Guide.

4.) 'Tis equally the Privilege of Reason to judge and determine (tho' with the utmost Care and Circumspection) concerning the Agreeableness or Disagreeableness of the entire Revelation to it's own clear and evident Dictates. For the clear Dictates of Reason, we may be assur'd, are such Discoveries of the Divine Nature and Will as no Revelation that is truly Divine can be supposed to contradict or repeal.

Such Exercise of Reason is the Privilege not only of the Learned, but of every Man who has a sufficient Capacity and Opportunity. For as a competent Knowledge of the Proofs and Contents of a Divine Revelation cannot but be of equal Concern to every capable Person to whom it is proposed, so we cannot doubt but they must be equally design'd for the Conviction, Use and Benefit of all capable Men.

Tho'

Tho' a Dependance on the probable PART  
Judgment of Men of reputed Learning II.  
and Integrity is the Duty and cannot  
but be sufficient for such who really  
want the Advantage either of Capacity  
or Opportunity to enquire into the  
Proofs and Contents of a Revelation,  
yet for such who possess both these  
Advantages nothing less than a diligent  
Enquiry into them can be sufficient.  
No Man or Body of Men can, with  
Reason, claim a Privilege to determine  
infallibly for others concerning the  
Truth of any Revelation: For as much  
as those others can have no sufficient  
Conviction of the Justice of their Claim  
without as good Proofs as are necessary  
to convince them of the Truth of the  
Revelation itself. But such Proofs no  
Man, or Body of Men can at present  
pretend to give. Nor can any Man or  
Body of Men justly claim a Privilege  
and Authority to determine thus infal-  
libly for others concerning any very  
important Doctrine of a Divine Reve-  
lation when received: For as much as  
we are assured that such Authority is  
needless (and therefore not given to  
any) since the Doctrines of a Reve-  
lation which is truly Divine, as far at  
least as they are of great Importance,  
cannot but be clearly expressed and  
sufficiently

P A R T sufficiently adapted to the Capacities of  
II. all whom they immediately concern ;  
I mean all such who have common Capacity and Opportunity. And as for Matters of Difficulty and less Importance, an Authority thus to decide concerning them is, it seems, not only needless but, as it tends to render our Reason useles, ~~it~~ directly interferes with the Divine Government of the World, which (as was observed) cannot be supposed ordinarily and universally to render useles the natural Powers or Faculties of it's Subjects. Besides, a proper General Council never did, and probably never can, convene to decide concerning such Matters ; and reputed General Councils, 'tis well known, have err'd and contradicted each other, as well as the Popes, the *Mufries*, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, the *Rabbins*, and the Modern Divines and *Cochams*. But Reason, if duly attended to (together with the ordinary Divine Assistance which every Man may, with good Ground, expect in the humble Exercise of it) will, as shall presently be shewn, tho' not absolutely free us from Error yet infallibly lead us to such Knowledge of reveal'd as well as natural Truths as is sufficient and useful to us.

S E C T.

## SECT. III.

As the Capacities and Circumstances of Men are very different, by which means it becomes impossible that every Proof or Part of such a Revelation should be perfectly perceiv'd and understood by all, we may, 'tis humbly conceiv'd, very safely conclude.

1.) That tho' the mention'd Duty of Dependance on the Judgment of another in certain Cases, imports a Sort of mediate Obligation, yet there can be no immediate Obligation either to Belief or Practice, farther than both the Meaning and Evidence of a Divine Law or Doctrine are possible to be perceiv'd by our selves in particular. If my Senses are defective, or if, on any other account, I neither had nor could have any, or could have but an imperfect, Information of a Law or Doctrine or of it's Divine Authority; or if my Reason be indisposed and, either wholly or in some Degree, incapable of forming a Judgment concerning it, 'tis clear that I am either not immediately obliged by it at all, or at the most, but in Proportion to that Degree of Conviction I am capable of receiving. For tho' the Great Governour of the World has, without Dispute, an absolute Right

(or

PART (or a Right independent on any Being) II. of prescribing Laws to his Subjects, yet ~~as~~ his own most perfect Justice and Goodness (or that most perfect Method of acting which his own Nature immutably inclines him to) will not suffer us to suppose that he should extend the Exercise of that Right so far as absolutely to exact Obedience from any who, without their Fault, are under a natural or accidental Incapacity of knowing those Laws, Nor doth this Reasoning hold only with respect to such Doctrines and Laws as are of pure Revelation, but it's Force extends even to the Doctrines and Laws of Nature. For tho' their Evidence diffuses itself more universally than that of any pretended Supernatural Revelation (in as much as they are capable of a Proof from what every Man, who has the right Exercise of his Faculties, may perceive in his own Mind) yet some Men for Want of Capacity, cannot (without the Assistance of others) have any, or at the best, can have but a very imperfect Idea of them.

2.) If, by reason either of some Defect in his Faculties, or of some unavoidable Misfortune in his Circumstances, a Man can neither mediately nor immediately receive any, or receives

ceives but an imperfect, or even a PART wrong Notion of some Part of Divine II. Revelation, whether natural or super-natural, we may, 'tis humbly conceiv-ed, (whatever some too rigid Casuists have determined to the contrary) safely conclude, that though acting erro-neously, yet if sincerely and to the best of his Judgment, he has done his Duty. For since the very Nature of the Divine Government (which, as we have observed, cannot but be suited to the Capacities of it's Subjects) demon-strates that such Knowledge as he is capable of attaining, cannot but be sufficient for him, it plainly follows, that his Practice according to such Knowledge, must likewise be suffi-cient.

These Reasonings hold good with reference to an Entire (supernatural) Revelation, as well as with regard to any of it's Parts. For as it can be no Man's Duty to believe, or Crime to disobey, any particular Doctrine or Law, if, without his Fault, he is de-stitute of all the Means of Infor-mation, so it cannot be a Crime for any Man not to embrace, or not to act ac-cording to such a Revelation, of the Credibility of which he can have no Information for Want of the necessary

F Means.

PART Means. No Man can be justly obliged  
to what is impossible in itself. Conse-  
quently, it could not be the Intention  
of the Just God to oblige all Men, or  
any Man, to believe the Divine Au-  
thority of any Revelation without al-  
lowing the necessary Means to inform  
him of that Authority. God hath not  
made it our indispensible Duty to find  
the Truth, but only to endeavour to  
find it. If therefore Truth doth not  
happen to be in our Way when we  
search for it, we do our Duty by doing  
our Endeavour.

'Tis no less reasonable to conclude,  
that since it is most certain that God  
hath not allowed to all Men the ne-  
cessary Means of Information with re-  
gard to any extraordinary Revelation  
of his Will, therefore no such Reve-  
lation can be of absolute Necessity to  
the supreme Happiness or Salvation of  
all Men. Was any such Revelation  
thus necessary, 'tis impossible to con-  
ceive how it could consist with the Di-  
vine Goodness that it should not be  
published to every Nation in every  
Age. For (on Supposition of such  
Necessity) it is not enough to say, that  
it has formerly been published to every  
Nation, if its Publication be not con-  
tinued to every Age; for as much as  
it

it cannot but sound very harsh in PART the Ears of any Man, to affirm, that, ~~III.~~  
in a Matter of the last Importance, ~~III.~~  
the Obstinacy and Infidelity of the Fore-fathers, considered in a private Capacity, should frustrate the good Intentions of the most Beneficent Deity towards their distant, and, in that respect, innocent Posterity.

From hence we may conclude, that though the great Corruptions of Mankind rendered such a Revelation necessary with regard to God, yet the Knowledge of it was not of absolute and universal Necessity with regard to Men.

As for the Doctrines which we may conceive to be inserted in an extraordinary Revelation, 'tis not unreasonable to conclude,

i. That such Doctrines cannot but be most clearly expressed, and most frequently inculcated, which directly tend to form the Practice. For as a very great Defection from the Practice of Piety and Virtue, first rendered an extraordinary Revelation necessary with regard to God; so those Discoveries of such a Divine Revelation which are of the greatest Importance, must, with-

PART out Dispute, such as regard religious  
II. Practice.

2.) That therefore the Doctrines  
which help to compose an extraordi-  
nary Divine Revelation, must be chief-  
ly such as directly regard the Practice  
of Piety and Virtue.

3.) That, however, it may not be  
inconsistent with the Divine Wisdom  
to reveal some Points of Speculation.  
But then, the Knowledge of these  
cannot (as far as they are purely specu-  
lative) be supposed to have a necessary  
Connection with our chief Happiness:  
For (as was proved) our chief Hap-  
piness doth not depend on the Exten-  
siveness or Infallibility of our Know-  
ledge, but on the Sincerity of our  
Practice. And as the Knowledge of  
such Matters cannot be necessary to  
our chief Happiness, so neither can  
the Belief of them, or of any hu-  
mane Explanations of them, be thus  
necessary: For as much as neither  
Knowledge nor Belief can be any  
otherwise necessary or useful to that  
End, than as it tends to influence the  
Practice.

We may here observe, that though  
an humble Search into Matters of Spe-  
culation may well be supposed agree-  
able to the Intent of the most Wise  
Revealer;

Revealer; yet if a Search be either PART undertaken with a View to render our II. imagined Discoveries the Standard of other Mens Faith, or pursu'd so far as to draw off ourselves or others from the Study and Practice of Piety and Virtue, it cannot but be very contrary to his Design. For to impose our Interpretations of a publick Divine Revelation as a Rule of Faith on others, is to assume an Authority which hath been shewn to be both needless and inconsistent with the Methods of the Divine Government. And to draw off ourselves or others from the Practice of Religion, is, in some degree, to frustrate the chief End of such a Revelation as is worthy of God.

## S E C T. V.

THUS much may suffice as to the Proofs and Characteristicks of such an extraordinary Revelation of the Divine Will as we cannot but think has been actually published to the World. We may next consider, What Institution, that pretends to the Authority of a Divine Revelation, can lay a just Claim to those Proofs and Characteristicks.

I persuade myself that whoever will seriously and impartially consider the

PART following Remarks, will be no longer  
II. dubious with regard to this great Point.

1. 'Tis well known that no other pretended Revelation lays any plausible Claim to the mentioned Proofs and Characteristicks but the *Jewish* and *Christian* Revelations only; and by consequence, either one or both of these must be truly Divine, or else no pretended Publick Revelation of the Divine Will has any just Claim to Divine Authority: Which we cannot reasonably allow to be the Case, if we reflect on what was said to prove the Fitness, and the Necessity of some publick, well-attested, Divine Revelation.

2. These two Revelations (*viz.* the *Jewish* and *Christian*) mutually confirm each others Pretensions: and consequently, if either the one or the other be truly Divine, they must both be so.

That the *Jewish* and *Christian* Revelations mutually confirm each others Pretensions to Divine Authority is certain. Because the numerous Types and Prophecies of the *Jewish* Revelation, relating to the *Messias*, confirm the Divine Mission of *Jesus*, in whom they had their Completion, and the Completion of those Types and Prophecies in *Jesus*, confirms the Truth of the

the *Jewish* Revelation, in which those PART Types and Prophecies are contained; II. and not only so, but the Completion of those Types and Prophecies in *Jesus*, proves the Abrogation of some Part of the *Jewish* Revelation, viz. whatever related to the distinguishing Privileges of the *Jewish* Nation, and the Ceremonial Law. Consequently, the *Christian* Revelation is not only a Divine Revelation, as well as the *Jewish*, but it is the only Divine Revelation that is entirely in Force.

That the Types and Prophecies of the *Jewish* Revelation relating to the *Messias*, have had their Completion in *Jesus*, and that those religious Privileges and Institutions which were typical and peculiar to the *Jewish* Nation, were thereby abrogated, will appear from the following Reflections.

I. 'Tis certain that we find in the *Jewish* Revelation many Prophecies (said to have been delivered not only by different Persons, but in many different Ages of the World) which, all of them, have long been conceived more or less plainly to center in a certain extraordinary Person, called, by way of Eminence, *the Messias*; who was to be born of the Family of *David*, at a certain Place and at a fixed

PART Time, for the Good and Advantage  
II. not only of the *Jews*, but of all Na-  
tions; who was to work Miracles, and  
to be cut off or put to Death; soon  
after which, the City of *Jerusalem* was  
to be destroyed, and such a new State  
of Things introduced as was incon-  
sistent with such Privileges as were  
peculiar to the *Jewish* Nation. For  
some of those Prophecies foretold the  
making of a New Covenant which  
should be common to all Nations, and  
the chooing Priests and Levites out of  
all People: Which Expressions can  
import no less than the Resumption of  
all those peculiar Privileges which had  
so long distinguished the *Jews* from  
other Nations: All which exactly a-  
grees with the History of *Jesus*. We  
find likewise many Ceremonies in that  
Revelation, which as they were in  
themselves of no Moral Efficacy (such  
as the Sacrifices and Purifications)  
may very reasonably be supposed to  
have been instituted as merely typi-  
cal Representations of some greater  
Things that were future. According-  
ly, the *Christian* Revelation assures  
us, that they were, no other than  
Types or Figures of the Sacrifice  
and Blood of *Jesus*, the future  
*Messias*, and of his Institutions, and  
that

that the Things signified by them be- P A R T  
ing now come, those Types or Figures II.  
do by Consequence cease. And it is   
on this Foot only that the Reasonable-  
ness of the *Jewish* Revelation is de-  
fensible.

2. One or more of the mentioned Prophecies, being very clear and express with respect to the Time of the *Messiah's* Birth, caused a very great and general Expectation among the *Jews* of his Appearance about the Time of the Birth of *Jesus*. For the Learned *Jews*, long before the Birth of *Jesus* (which was about Two thousand Years after the giving of the *Jewish* Law), divided the Time of the World's Duration into Three Periods, *viz.* Two thousand Years before the Law, Two thousand under the Law, and Two thousand under the *Messiah* \*. And the Report of this general Expectation of the *Messias* extended itself even among the neighbouring *Pagans*, especially those of the *Eastern* Parts, as appears from the unexceptionable Testimonies of *Suetonius* and *Tacitus* †.

3. Though the *Jews* at the Time of the Appearance of *Jesus* (through Prejudice, occasioned by their misunderstanding

\* Buxtorf. *Syn. Jud.* p. 511.

† *Sueton. in Vespas. Tacit. Hist. Lib. I.*

PART derstanding some of the Prophecies  
 II. which spoke of the future Kingdom of  
 the *Messias*, and which induced them  
 to imagine he should be a Temporal  
 Prince) refused to acknowledge and  
 receive him as the *Messias*, yet we are  
 assured that they were, about that  
 Time and since, very forward (as he  
 himself foretold) to receive others  
 who had no colourable Pretension to  
 the many and extraordinary Characters  
 of the *Messias* contained in the men-  
 tioned Prophecies. Such were *Bar*  
*Cochba*, *David el David*, *Sabbatai*  
*Sevi*, and divers others.

4. All those other Pretenders to the  
 Title and Dignity of the *Messias* hav-  
 ing proved Impostors, and no Claim  
 being kept up to the mentioned Cha-  
 racters of the *Messias* (the Time of  
 whose Appearance, according to all  
 possible Computations, is confessed to  
 be long since elapsed) but only that of  
*Jesus*, it follows, that if his Claim be  
 not allowed, no other can possibly be  
 admitted. For since the *putting an*  
*End to Sin*, was to be one End of the  
*Messiah's Coming*, certainly his Com-  
 ing could not (as the *Jews* pretend)  
 be deferred on Account of Sin. But  
 if the Claim of *Jesus* be allowed (as  
 the evident fulfilling of all those Types  
 and

and Prophecies in Him will demon-<sup>PART</sup>  
strate to be most reasonable) then it <sup>II.</sup>  
cannot but follow, that such Institu-  
tions as were peculiar to the *Jewish*  
Revelation (and were only typical) are  
indeed abrogated, and that the New  
State of Things, foretold by the an-  
cient Prophecies, is actually come;  
and likewise (as was before inferred)  
that the *Christian* Revelation is not only  
a Divine Revelation, but the One-  
ly Divine Revelation which is now en-  
tirely in Force.

After what has been said, the Ob-  
jection of the *Jews* concerning the Ce-  
remonial Law being perpetual or *for*  
*ever*, cannot be allowed to have any  
Weight. For as the *Jewish* Rites and  
Ceremonies, being in themselves of no  
real Worth, could not be any Part of  
the Law of Nature (which alone is im-  
mutable in itself) so it is most unrea-  
sonable to imagine they should be rendered  
strictly Perpetual by Virtue of the free  
Ordination of God, who not only, by  
his Prophets, speaks very contemptibly  
of those Ceremonial Institutions, but  
sometimes actually dispensed with the  
Observation, and even foretold the A-  
bolition of divers of them; particular-  
ly of the Sacrifices and Festivals \*. If  
therefore

\* See Dan. ix. and Jer. i.

PART therefore the Ceremonial Law be spo-

H. ken of as *Perpetual* (as it is in *Lev. xxiii.*

14.) it is to be consider'd that the Word in the Original doth not necessarily import an absolute Perpetuity, but signifies according to the Nature of the Subject to which it is applied. Nor was it understood of the absolute Perpetuity of that System of Laws by the ancient *Jews*; who expected a great Change at the Coming of the *Messias*, particularly with regard to forbidden Meats: And even the *Talmud* (as quoted by *Grotius* †) teaches, that the Ceremonial Law was designed to continue no longer in Force than till the Time of the *Messias*.

But 'tis objected, that the mentioned Prophecies of the *Jewish* Revelation, tho' applied to *Jesus*, are either very darkly expressed, or did not primarily or immediately regard the *Messias*.

This may be allowed to be true of some, but not of all. Particularly (to mention no more) it is not true of that most remarkable Prophecy in the ninth Chapter of *Daniel*, which plainly fixes the Time of the *Messiah's* Appearance, giving him the Titles of the *Most Holy*, the *Bringer in of Everlasting Righteousness*, by the putting an End to *Sin*, and the

† Annot. ad Lib. V. de Ver. Chr. Relig.

*the Sealer or Fulfiller of the Prophecies.* PART  
This Prediction of *Daniel* fixes the II.  
Time of the *Messias*, Seventy Prophe-  
tical Weeks (or Weeks of Years) after  
the going forth of the Decree or Edict  
for Rebuilding of *Jerusalem*, and is so  
evidently fulfilled in *Jesus*, that of  
Three different Computations from  
Three several Epoches or Dates (ac-  
cording to three several Edicts) there  
is not one but sufficiently proves *Jesus*  
to be the *Messias* intended; as hath  
been made appear by Sir *Isaac Newton*, Dr. *Prideaux* and Bishop *Lloyd*.  
Whereas this Prophecy, taken with all  
its Circumstances, cannot on the con-  
trary be applied to any other Person or  
Persons, as hath been proved by the  
Learned Bishop of *Coventry* and *Litch-  
field* in his *Vindication of his Defence  
of Christianity*, Vol. 1, who likewise  
very copiously and learnedly answers  
the Objections of the Author of the  
*Scheme of Literal Prophecy considered*,  
against the Divine Authority of the  
Book of *Daniel*.

As for some other Prophecies of less  
Importance, which are applied to *Jesus*  
in the *Christian* Revelation, notwith-  
standing that they do not primarily or  
immediately regard the *Messias*, 'tis  
sufficient if they refer to the *Messias*,  
though

PART though but in a secondary Sense. That

II. the Jews, at the Time of Jesus, generally understood them to have such a Reference, may appear from the confident Appeal of Jesus himself, and of the Evangelists and Apostles (instructed by him) to the Testimony of those Ancient Prophecies; which, most certainly, common Sense would have restrained them from, had they not been assured that the Jews themselves applied them to the expected *Messias*. And that the Jews were not mistaken in applying those Prophetical Expressions to the *Messias*, may likewise very reasonably be concluded from the mentioned Appeal of Jesus, supported by his Doctrine, Miracles and Predictions; of which we are about to produce unexceptionable Proofs. Besides, 'tis unaccountable that the Jews should so generally agree in so applying those Prophecies, had they not been induced to it either by some extraordinary Circumstances which plainly prove them to be Excursions from the Subject primarily intended, or else by some very ancient Traditions of great Weight and Authority.

Thus by supposing (not without sufficient Reason) that some extraordinary Revelation was necessary, with regard

regard to God, we have made it appear from the Claim laid by *Christianity* to all the external Proofs of such a **PART**  
**II.**  
Revelation, joyned with a Comparison between it and the *Jewish* Revelation, that *Christianity* is not only a Divine Revelation, but likewise that it is the only extraordinary Divine Revelation which is entirely in Force. We shall now dismiss the Supposition of the Necessity of any extraordinary Divine Revelation, and shall prove directly, that the Claim of *Christianity* to all the external Proofs of a Divine Extraordinary Revelation, is just and well-grounded: Which, together with its Agreeableness to Reason, will likewise demonstrate it to be such a Revelation: As was proved.

That the Claim laid by *Christianity* to the Two main external Proofs of an extraordinary Divine Revelation is just and well-grounded, will appear partly by the Confession of the *Jews* \*, who bear Testimony to the real Wonders or *Miracles* wrought by *Jesus*, and partly from our own Experience, who are Witnesses of the fulfilling of his *Prophecies* concerning the Destruction of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, and the Propagation of his Religion throughout the World

\* Talmud in Tit. *Aboda Zara.*

PART World. But the Justice of it's Claim  
II. to All the External Proofs, will fully  
appear by the following Observations,  
tending to prove the unexceptionable  
Conveyance both of the *Jewish* and  
*Christian* Revelation together with the  
Authentick Histories of all the men-  
tion'd External Proofs of their Divine  
Authority down to our Times.

The unquestionable Conveyance of the  
*Christian* Revelation, and of the His-  
tory of the External Proofs of it's Divine  
Authority, down to our Times, will  
yield a sufficient Proof of the like un-  
exceptionable Conveyance of the *Jew-  
ish* Revelation, together with the His-  
tory of it's External Evidence, down  
to the Time of *Jesus*. For had the  
*Jewish* Revelation, at that Time, been  
in any considerable Instance, either  
with regard to it's History or Doctrine,  
imperfect or corrupted, we may be as-  
sured that He (allowing him to have  
been what the History of his own  
Miracles and Prophecies, together  
with his Doctrines will (alone) prove  
him to have been) would have made a  
Discovery of it. That the Conveyance  
of the *Christian* Revelation, together  
with theauthentick History of it's Ex-  
ternal Proofs, down to our Times, hath  
been

been Unexceptionable, will appear PART  
from the following Remarks. II.

II.

1.) Tho' Jesus himself committed nothing to Writing, yet it cannot reasonably be denied, that his Followers had, very early, certain Writings which were generally received as genuine, and which contained the Doctrines and History of the Founder of their Religion; the Writers of which, for the most Part, were perfectly acquainted with his Person, Doctrine and Actions, and sealed the Truth of their Testimony with their Blood.

2.) There is no Room to doubt that the true Followers of Jesus in general did their utmost to preserve those Writings pure and entire, in Opposition to such who might endeavour to innovate, either by altering them, or by forging and introducing spurious Writings.

3.) Though some of the Writings which compose the Canon of the New Testament, were not generally received at the first (as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the *Revelations* of St. John) yet these are not inconsistent with the other Books, that were first received. And about the Middle of the Fourth Century, the Council of *Laodicea* gave a Catalogue of the very same Histori-

PARTical and Doctrinal Books which are received at present. And though the Second Council of Carthage, in the Year 398, added several of the Apocryphal Books to the Canon of the Old Testament, yet the mentioned Canon of the New Testament remained the same.

4.) About that Time, those Writings were translated into most Languages, and dispers'd amongst most Nations in the World.

5.) Neither the Ancient nor Modern Hereticks could ever introduce any spurious Book into the Canon of the New Testament, nor corrupt the Text of such Books as were Genuine, to any considerable Degree, in Favour of their Opinions; for as much as enough is at present to be found in those Canonical Writings to baffle and confute them: And to corrupt the History they had little Temptation.

6.) Had the Writings which compose the Canon of the New Testament (or Christian Revelation) been at any Time corrupted in any one remarkable Instance, they must have been corrupted to a great Degree; otherwise, there could not have been at present such Harmony or Agreement among the

\* Theodoret. Serm. 50. contra Gracos.

the great Numbers of Texts which PART relate to the same Important Points of History and Doctrine. But such a great Degree of Corruption was impossible to be introduced without such a general Consent as is impossible to be conceived, considering the Multitude of Copies, and the Diversity of Languages in which they were written.

7.) In Confirmation of all this, it is remarkable that the numerous Quotations from the Writings of the *New Testament*, which are to be found in the Books of the *Christian Fathers* and Doctors published in all Ages of the Church agree sufficiently with the Canonical Writings which have been handed down to our Times.

As for the Books which contain the *Jewish* Revelation, they have been, since the Time of *Jesus*, in the Hands both of *Jews* and *Christians*, who have served as Checks upon each other, to prevent any Frauds with regard to those Sacred Writings. And the Books which are received as Canonical by the present *Jews*, are accordingly found to agree with those which have been preserved among the *Christians*.

All these Considerations, compared together, amount to as full a Demonstration as any Matters of Fact are capable

PART pable of, that both the Jewish and  
II. Christian Revelations have a just Claim  
to all the External Proofs of Divine  
Revelations, as well as that they are pre-  
served sufficiently pure and entire.

## S E C T. VI.

THOUGH the Force of our Argu-  
ment for the Necessity of some pub-  
lick Revelation of the Divine Will,  
which supports one of our Proofs of  
the Truth of Christianity, is such, that  
nothing, I conceive, needs be added  
for the Conviction of those Opposers  
of *Revealed Religion* who acknowledge  
a Providence, yet for the more effectual  
Confirming of People in the Belief  
of Divine Revelation, it may not be  
amiss to observe here, how far the  
Conduct of Divine Providence hath  
always been agreeable to that Method  
of Reasoning. For I apprehend it  
may still be objected, that the Christian  
Revelation came very late into  
the World (viz. when it was near  
Four thousand Years old) and that  
though the Jewish Revelation was in-  
deed much earlier yet it was confined,  
in a manner, to one Nation: Which  
Facts seem but ill to suit with such a  
Necessity with regard to God, since  
had a publick Revelation of his Will  
been

been necessary with regard to Him, in PART the mentioned Case of so general a Corruption, we may reasonably suppose that the very early Depravation of Mankind would have inclined him both to publish a Revelation more early, and to render it more extensive. II.

The following Remarks will give, it is conceived, sufficient Light into this Matter.

The History of *Moses* (which is allowed to be the most ancient of all Histories) assures us, that immediately after the Creation, God revealed to our common Parents the Connection between Sin and Punishment; and that as soon as the Corruption of the Human Species by Sin began, He proceeded to make some Discovery of a future Remedy. These Revelations of the Divine Will, joyned with the recent Memory of the Creation, were doubtless sufficient to have produced a good Effect on the degenerate Race of Men. But proving however ineffectual, the *Mosaick* History gives room to believe that another Revelation was made to *Enoch*; who is said to have been a Person of extraordinary Piety, and who, no doubt, instructed the People not only by a good Life, but by his Doctrine. For that he was di-

**PART** I. **vinely** inspired, appears from the Testimony of St. Jude, who mentions a Prophecy of his concerning the Coming of Christ to judge the World.

But Mankind becoming still more degenerate, *Noah, a Preacher of Righteousness*, is said to have been sent as a proper Instrument to reclaim and save from Destruction, a most corrupt and vicious World.

But both these Revelations, made to *Enoch* and *Noah* (though doubtless venerated with sufficient Proofs of their Divine Authority) proving ineffectual, the Consequence was an almost total Extirpation of the Human Species by the Deluge or Flood. Of which most Awful Event not only the Mosaic History, but the Histories and Traditions of most Nations give an Account; and even the Relicts and Monuments of it are, with good Reason, supposed to be visible to this Day.

After the Deluge, 'tis reasonable to think that the Memory of so general a Destruction of Mankind could not but strike a Terror into the succeeding Generations, and by retaining them within the Bounds of Duty, render any other extraordinary Revelation, for a Time, unnecessary. But the Memory of this great Calamity wearing off to a greater

greater Degree than could well have PART  
been imagined in so short a Space, an- II.  
other Revelation is said to have been  
made to *Abraham*, and afterwards  
more fully to *Moses* and the other Pro-  
phets: Which was confirmed by extra-  
ordinary Signs and Wonders. The  
Theatre on which those Wonders were  
chiefly wrought, was *Egypt*; the Seat,  
at that Time, of the most Polite and  
Famous Nation in the World. So that  
the Fame of what happened there  
could not fail of spreading far and  
near; and the Revelation which had  
been made to *Abraham* (whose Poste-  
rity were a long time Servants there,  
could not but be enquired into by the  
Curious *Egyptians*. And it is very pro-  
bable, that the Doctrine of One God,  
the Creator and Governour of All  
Things, was by that Means derived to  
the neighbouring Nations by such Fo-  
reigners who came into *Egypt* to be in-  
structed in the *Egyptian* Mysteries;  
especially by the *Greeks*, from whom  
most other Nations borrowed their  
Learning and Civility. So that this  
Revelation, made to *Abraham* and *Mo-  
ses* (though chiefly designed for the Be-  
nefit of *Abraham's* Posterity) appears  
to have had no inconsiderable Influ-  
ence, even then, on a great Part of the

PART World; and no doubt but its Influence

II. became yet more extensive afterwards  
by Means both of the Conquests and  
Captivities of Abraham's Posterity, and  
by the Famous Navigations or Voy-  
ages of the *Phœnicians*. This may ap-  
pear from some remarkable Fragments  
not only of the *Mosaick* History, but  
likewise of the *Mosaick* Law, which  
have been preserved among most Na-  
tions \*.

At last, in an Age when Vice and  
Irreligion ( notwithstanding all the  
Checks of former Revelations and of  
Philosophy) were arriv'd at an uncom-  
mon Height, the most Perfect, as well  
as the most Extensive Revelation was  
made by *Jesus Christ*, and confirmed  
not only by the Revelations of *Moses*  
and the other Prophets, but by such  
Miracles and other Extraordinary  
Proofs, as ought to give Satisfaction to  
all future Ages. But it is to be ob-  
served, that though this last publick  
Revelation is alone styled the *Christian*  
Revelation, yet all the former Reve-  
lations appear to have been so many  
less perfect Revelations of *Christ*. 'Tis  
likewise further remarkable, that tho'  
the most perfect Revelation came late

into

\* Vid. Grot. Lib. 1. de Ver. Christ. Relig.

into the World, and, perhaps, never P A R T  
reach'd, properly speaking, to every NATION in it, yet the Benefits obtained  
by Christ for Mankind, extended (as  
we have great Reason to believe) not  
only forwards to the End of Time, but  
backwards to the First Ages of the  
World; not only to some Particular  
Nations, but, in greater or lesser De-  
grees, to All in general.

## S E C T. VII.

HAVING sufficiently displayed the Evidence of the External Proofs of Christianity, we shall now proceed to a particular Consideration of it's Principal Doctrines and Laws, and shall endeavour to shew their Reasonableness; in order to clear the main *Internal* Proof, which we have good Ground to think is not wanting where all the External Proofs are to be found.

The Doctrines which are generally reputed the most Essential to Christianity, and which, though clearly revealed, have most exercised the Wits of Men in Explaining the Manner of them, are those of the *Trinity*, the *Fall*, the *Resurrection*, *eternal Punishment*, and some others reducible to them: Of which we shall treat in their Order, as far as the Sacred Writings shall

PART shall appear to leave Room for inodest

II. Conjecture and Reasoning.

Though nothing is more plainly asserted in the *Christian* (as well as the *Jewish*) Revelation than the *Unity* of the Godhead, yet 'tis most certain there are *Three* to whom the Names, Titles and Attributes of God are sometimes ascribed, and who are represented as acting with reference not only to the Creatures, but to each other. This plainly imports somewhat more than such a *Trinity* of mere *Names*, or even *Relations*, as some have imagined, and yet less than a *Trinity* of Proper Divine Beings, as others have (at least by Implication) asserted. 'Tis therefore very natural, in the first Place, to enquire, whether those Names and Titles are given to Three in the same Sense, and whether the Attributes ascribed to All, are such as are Incommunicable to any Inferiour Nature. For if the Names and Titles given to Three are given in a Proper Sense to One only, or if the Attributes ascribed to Three, appear to be independently possess'd but by One, and to have been communicated by Him to the Others, 'tis plain that the Being to which the Divine Names, Titles, and Attributes belong Properly and Independently, is alone God,

God, and by Consequence, that the ~~PA R T~~  
*Christian* Revelation asserts nothing but what is perfectly consistent with the Unity of God, and agreeable to Reason. However, if, on the contrary, it doth not appear that the *Christian* Revelation ascribes them thus Properly and Independently to One Only, we must not presently conclude that *Christianity* (an Institution which appears to be attested by the most unexceptionable External Proofs) contains what is Inconsistent or Unreasonable, but proceed to make a farther Enquiry.

The Hypotheses which import that the Divine Names, Titles and Attributes are (either All or Some of them) ascribed to the Second and Third in the Sacred Trinity in a different Sense from that in which they are ascribed to the First, are those of the *Arians* and *Socinians*. The genuine Disciples of *Arius* assert, that the *Christian* Trinity consists of One Uncreated, and Two Created Natures. The Followers of *Socinus* contend that it consists of One Uncreated, and One Created Nature, and of a certain Divine Virtue of Quality. But against both these Opinions there lies this very Reasonable Objection (among divers others)

*viz.*

PART viz. that the so frequent ascribing of  
II. the Divine Names, Titles and Attri-  
butes to mere Creatures by a Divine  
Revelation, would be very unaccount-  
able, when a Revelation which is like-  
wise confessed to be Divine, assures us,  
that God will not give his Glory to An-  
other. Besides, the Patrons of both  
these Hypotheses (the Socinians espe-  
cially) are obliged to use such Arts to  
reconcile (as it were) the Scriptures to  
their Schemes, that it gives too much  
Ground to suspect that they are far from  
being favoured by those Sacred Books.

As for such who seem to suppose  
the Second and Third of the Holy  
Trinity to result from the First by a  
properly Eternal Emanation, though  
they find not so much Difficulty to re-  
concile their Opinion to the Letter of  
the Scriptures, yet they cannot per-  
haps, so easily reconcile it to Reason.  
For as whatever is Eternal is Necessa-  
ry, so the Necessity of an Eternal Es-  
sence could not result from the Free  
or Indetermined Action of any Will.  
Consequently, if we suppose an Eter-  
nal Essence was derived from another  
Eternal Essence, it's Necessity must be  
conceived to have had the very same  
Original Foundation or Reason with  
the Necessity of that Essence from  
which

which it is supposed to have been derived, and on which it depended. But this seems inconsistent with Reason. For the Foundation or Reason of the Necessity of the Original or Independent Essence, was (as we have proved) One and Uniform \*, and nothing less than the Utmost or Greatest Perfection; but this could not be the Foundation or Reason of the Necessity of Divers Essences of Greater and Lesser Perfection; much less of Three rather than of More or Fewer.

From hence it follows, that Eternity or Necessity (with regard to Existence) was incommunicable, or could not belong to any but the Supreme or Independent Essence; and that therefore if it be ascribed by those Divines to the Second and Third Persons of the Sacred Trinity as Properly as to the First, they must allow them, together with the First, to be the One Supreme Being, or God in the most Proper Sense.

Since therefore a Trinity of Personalities in the Divine Being appears necessary to be asserted, it seems we must proceed and consider how the Divine Nature may admit of such a Trinity in sufficient Consistence with its Unity.

But

\* See the Preface.

PARAT<sup>Y</sup> But, by the way, we cannot avoid taking Notice of an Hypothesis which has been lately revived by a certain Ingenious Author \*: which Hypothesis imports, that the Entire Divine Nature is the First, and only Proper, Person of the Sacred Trinity, and that Two Powers of the same Nature (which are Figuratively represented as Persons) are the Second and Third of that Trinity. But 'tis easy to remark, that this is not a Proper Trinity in the Divine Nature, but a *Duality* only, and that not of Persons, but of Powers. Besides, whereas one would imagine that when it is said, *There are Three that bear witness in Heaven*, these Three should be as properly Three as the Three which are afterwards said to *bear witness on Earth*, yet (if this Opinion be true) the First Heavenly Witness includes Both the Others, as certainly as the Entire Divine Nature includes Both the mentioned Divine Powers. 'Tis likewise somewhat unaccountable that we should be Baptized in the Names of a Person, and of Two Powers which constitute that very Person. It may further be objected against the Supposition of merely Figurative Persons, that it is impossible

\* Mr. Watts, in his *Dissertations on the Trinity*.

impossible to imagine, that the inspir'd ~~PART~~  
Writers of the New Testament (though ~~II.~~  
their Style in some Cases, is, accord-  
ing to the Custom of the Jews and o-  
ther Eastern Nations, sufficiently Figu-  
rative) should be directed to carry on a  
Figurative Style throughout a whole  
Scheme of the last Importance, in  
which Scheme, if in any, it was ne-  
cessary to guard against Mistakes tend-  
ing to *Polytheism*; especially since they  
writ not for the Eastern Nations only,  
but used the Greek Language, which  
was then become almost Universal, and  
published their Writings for the Bene-  
fit not only of that, but of all future  
Ages.

It seems then, that this is not the  
*Christian Trinity*; which we have Rea-  
son to believe is a Proper Trinity in  
the Divine Nature. Let us therefore  
proceed; and, for as much as this Do-  
ctrine appears to be of greater Antiqui-  
ty than the Writings of the *New Testa-  
ment*, let us trace it up to the more  
early Ages of the World.

If we consult *Pagan Antiquity*, it  
will appear, that there has been a very  
early Tradition concerning a Trinity in  
the Divine Nature. This may partly  
be inferred from the *Orpheick Verses*,  
which mention the θεος ουκ οντος, and the  
Αὐτόν

PART <sup>Αὐτὸν Πατέρας, Τὸν Δινέον Λόγον ή Θεόν</sup> The Divine Word or Reason  
 II. and the Voice of the Father. And Pythagoras, who travelled much, and (as Porphyry assures us) conversed with the Chaldeans and Jews, appears to have derived from them a Notion of such a Trinity: For he is said to have applied the Number *Three*, (as the most perfect Number) to the Supreme God \*. And accordingly, the Three first Principles of the Pythagorick *Τετραγωνός*, or *Quaternity* (the Fourth of which, *viz.* *Matter*, was nothing Divine) were the very same with those Divine Principles which composed the *Platonick Trinity*. As for Plato, he assures us in his *Philebus*, that he had received a Tradition not only concerning the Unity of God, but likewise concerning a Trinity in that Unity, from the Ancients: Which Trinity his Followers expressed by the Terms *Father*, *Mind*, (*Word* or *Son*), and *Spirit* (or *Soul of the World*.) This Tradition he himself calls the Tradition of the *Εν μετα πολλα, Ον καὶ πολλα*, One and Many (or various †). And though some have imagined that Two of the Principles which composed Plato's Trinity,

\* *Servius ad Eclog. Sept.*

† In the same restrain'd Sense *Sabellius* is said by St. Basil to have styled the Trinity, *Εν μετα πολλα πολλα*, or one Thing under various Denominations.

were supposed to be Creatures, yet the PART contrary appears both from his own WORDS (which import that the Deity which is One, is likewise Various) and also from the Testimonies of his Two eminent Disciples, *Plotinus* and *Porphyrie*.

As for the Jews, 'tis observed, that though some of their less ancient Writers (usually called *Rabbinical*) speak of a Sort of Trinity in the Godhead under the Notion of Three *Middoth* or Properties, yet none of those that are the more ancient (*i. e.* neither the Writers of the *Old Testament*, nor of the *Apocrypha*, nor even of the *Targums*) make the least mention of a Trinity of any Sort. They speak indeed of the *Word* and *Son of God* as of a Divine Person; but not so of the *Spirit*. This may well appear somewhat strange and surprizing, since we have the Testimony of *Jamblicus* (the Disciple of *Porphyrie*) that *Plato* borrowed his Notion of the Trinity from the Jews. But the true Solution of this Difficulty seems to be this, *viz.* that the Jews learned not the Doctrine of the Trinity from any of their more ancient Writers, but received it by Oral Tradition from the more early Ages of the World.

H—y

This

PART. This most ancient Doctrine (the  
H. Knowledge of it being since become  
of greater Importance) is plainly con-  
firmed by the Inspired Writers of the  
New Testament, who distinguish the  
Persons of the Trinity by the Names  
of the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy  
Spirit*.

Thus much may be sufficient with  
regard to the History of this Traditional  
Doctrine of Three Divine Persons,  
and the Authorities by which it  
is supported. We may now proceed  
to consider it's Agreeableness to Rea-  
son.

It must be confessed, that the Intro-  
ducers of the *Latin* Words *Persona* and  
*Personalitas* (as well as of the Greek  
*Ψυχή* in the present Sense) met with  
great Opposition in the Church. And though the Learned, being convinced  
by so many Texts of Scripture which  
ascribe Personal Actions to the Sacred  
Three, have long since received those  
Terms, yet the Divine Persons must  
be allowed to be of a somewhat diffe-  
rent Kind from all other Persons. For  
with regard to Created Persons, (or  
Intelligent, or Conscious Agents) not  
only a Distinction of Substance, but of  
Consciousness too is to be understood  
by *Personality*: Whereas 'tis allowed,  
that

that neither of these Distinctions can PART take place with regard to Divine Persons.

II.

That some Sort of Trinity in the Divine Nature, is not only possible, but, according to our Conceptions, necessary, may appear from the following Remarks.

1. The Opinion of the *Absolute Simplicity* of the Divine Being (as importing the Real Identity of the Divine Perfections with each other and the Common Nature) has, 'tis humbly conceived, been made appear elsewhere \*, to be altogether Groundless: And, I think, 'tis now generally given up as Indefensible.

2. The Absolute Necessity with which the Divine Nature exists, has been proved in the *Preface*, to be founded in the Utmost Internal Perfection. Consequently, the Divine Nature, since it includes the Utmost Perfection, cannot but include whatever Distinction is contained in the Nature of Perfection.

3. If therefore the Nature of Perfection necessarily includes or contains a Trine Distinction, then a Trinity must be allowed to be necessary in the Divine or most perfect Nature.

H 2

If

\* *Impartial Inquiry*, p. 190.

**PART** II. If it be asked, What Reason we have to imagine that the Nature of Perfection includes or contains a Trinity rather than a Quaternity, or any other Limited or Determinate Number, it must indeed be confessed, that we cannot produce Demonstration for it, because our Idea of Perfection cannot be demonstrated to be Adequate. But it may, at the same time, be affirmed, that according to the best Idea we can form of Perfection, it appears to include in itself, and by Consequence to infer in the Being to which it belongs, Three Powers or Principles of Action to which all our other Internal Ideas of it are reducible. These (according to the inverted Order in which we elsewhere \* demonstrated them to belong to the Divine Being) were observed to be *Selfactivity* or a Principle of External Action, *Intelligence* (or rather *Wisdom*, which includes in it's Idea more than pure Intelligence) and *Liberty*, or an Independent, Elective, Self-determining Power, capable of influencing and governing the Natural Activity with regard to External Action. Which Powers or Faculties bear some Analogy or Resemblance to *Executive*

\* Impartial Enquiry. p. 28.

cutive Power, Understanding (or rather PART Reason, which is an Active Principle, and includes more than pure Understanding or Intelligence) and Will or Volitive Power, in ourselves, who, as the Scripture informs us, were created in the Divine Image. And it is most certain, that we cannot conceive either any more or fewer Powers or Faculties than these Three to contribute to the Perfection of an Intelligent Being as such. For perfectly to Perceive and Judge, freely to Will or Choose, and effectually to Execute, Comprehend whatever comes within our Notion of Power. So that a Trinity (though it seems to be a Sort of Limitation) appears to be included in the very Nature of Perfection.

That this Trinity, which (if we think rightly) cannot but be supposed to belong to the Nature of the most Perfect Being, may, not improperly, be stiled a *Trinity of Persons*, will 'tis humbly conceived, appear from the following Considerations.

1.) Though there must be conceived some Analogy between the Powers or Faculties of All Intelligent Beings, yet it may not be unreasonable to suppose as great a Difference between the Powers or Faculties of the most perfect

PART Being and those of his Creatures, as can well consist with such Analogy.

II. 2.) Whatever is conceived to be natural to the Eternal (or Absolutely Necessary and Most Perfect) Being, must likewise be conceived as Absolutely Necessary, and by Consequence, as Most Perfect.

3.) Therefore, as the Foundation of the Distinction between the Powers and Faculties of the Divine (or Eternal) Being must (since it is natural) be, conceived to be Absolutely Necessary it must likewise be conceived to be the most perfect or real Foundation of Distinction that can possibly consist with the Unity of the Divine Nature, and the Unity of the Divine Nature must, for the same Reason, be conceived to be the most perfect or real Unity that can possibly consist with that Distinction.

4.) We observe in our own Minds Three Faculties or Powers or Principles of Action, which (according to the Order wherein they sometimes act in us) are *Will*, *Reason* and *Effective Power*, and which, though they are so far united as they subsist in One and the same Being, yet no Man, I suppose, can doubt but they might have been

more

more strictly united, had it seemed good PART to the Great Creator.

II.

5.) Let us now, with the utmost Reverence, suppose (what has elsewhere been proved) that there are Three Principles of Action in the Divine, or Eternal, Being, which bear some Analogy or Resemblance to these Three which we experience in ourselves (and which we cannot but conceive to be both Necessary and Sufficient to the Perfection of every Intelligent Being, as such) *viz.* First, A Perfect Elective and Self-determining Principle; which we expressed by *Liberty* or Freedom of Will. Secondly, A Perfect Imaginative Principle or Source of Ideas (which Principle we cannot but conceive as somewhat distinct from and perfective of pure Intelligence, Understanding or Consciousness, and which, together with Intelligence, may be termed *Wisdom*;) and Lastly, A Perfect Executive Principle, which we termed *Self-activity*.

6.) These Three Divine Powers or Principles of Action, must (as was proved) be conceived to be united in the most Perfect or Real Manner possible.

7.) In order to their being conceived as united in the most Perfect or Real

PART Manner possible, they must be sup-  
 II. posed not only to subsist in the same  
 Being (as do the Three aforementioned Powers or Faculties in ourselves) but likewise to partake (if I may so express it) of the same Common Intelligence or Consciousness. For that this is a possible Supposition, is plain; because Pure Intelligence is no distinct active Principle or Power, and therefore may be conceived to belong in common to the Three mentioned Divine Powers or Principles of Action.

8.) Though our Elective Power or Will, having no Consciousness or Intelligence, is no other than *Facultas Cæca* (or a Blind Power or Faculty) and therefore depends on the Understanding, whenever we act regularly; yet the Divine Will, being a Perfect, Independent, Elective and Self-determining Principle endued with Perfect Intelligence, cannot but be always the First Principle of Action in the Divine Being; as a perfect Imaginative Principle (which, superadded to Intelligence or Understanding, may be termed *Wisdom and Reason*) cannot but be the Second, and a Perfect Executive Principle the Third.

9.) These

9.) These Three perfect Powers or **P A R T**  
Principles of Action (*viz.* the *Elective* II.  
or *Volitive*, the *Imaginative* and the *Executive*) thus necessarily distinguish-  
ed, and yet as necessarily united, in One  
common Intelligent Nature, and act-  
ing jointly and harmoniously in a cer-  
tain most regular Order, are, perhaps,  
what is meant by the Divine Trinity.

10.) The same Trinity of Divine  
Active Principles, being most really  
distinct, tho' mutually conscious and  
subsisting in One Intelligent Nature,  
may, 'tis humbly supposed, with suf-  
ficient Propriety, be termed *Persons*.  
For separate Subsistence and a distinct  
Consciousness or Intelligence, are, it  
it seems, in no Case to be conceived  
necessary to constitute a distinct Per-  
son, but only when (as in Created Be-  
ings) a sufficient Distinction cannot be  
conceived without them. Whereas in  
the Divine Being; notwithstanding the  
most perfect Unity as to Substance and  
Consciousness, there cannot but be the  
most Real (because the most Necessa-  
ry) Distinction between the Conscious  
Principles: As was proved.

That it is very reasonable to sup-  
pose a Distinction between the *Will*  
or *Volitive Power*, and the *Executive*  
or *Effective Power* in the Divine Being,  
is

PART is clear; for as much as it is impossible  
II. for us to conceive how a pure Act of  
the Will can effect any Thing. Therefore when 'tis said, that with God to  
Will is to Effect, we cannot conceive  
it to have any other Meaning than that  
the Divine Being never wants Power  
to render the Acts of the Will efficacious.

In perfect Consistence with this  
Scheme, we find that the First Person  
of the Sacred Trinity is represented as  
the Prime Agent or First-moving Prin-  
ciple and Cause of All Things. The  
Second Person hath the Character of  
the Word, Reason or Wisdom, by which  
(as by a Rule or Instrument) *the Worlds*  
*were made*. He is said, to be *the Light*  
*that lighteth every Man that cometh into*  
*the World*; for as much as Humane  
Reason is as a Ray of the Divine Light  
or Wisdom. And in our Saviour, whose  
Humanity is peculiarly united to the  
Second Person, *All the Treasures of*  
*Wisdom and Knowledge are*, said to be,  
*bidden*. The Third Person is likewise  
very consistently represented as the Di-  
vine Executive Principle, or as the Di-  
vine Virtue or Influence working on  
and in the Creatures. He is said at the  
Creation to have *moved on the Face of*  
*the Waters*. He is said, to have *spoken*  
*by*

by the Prophets, and to have inspired all P A R T the Sacred Writers; and, in short, to be the immediate Author of every extraordinary Work, and the Giver of every valuable Gift. And 'tis remarkable, that the Third Person, or Holy Spirit, when represented properly as the Divine *Executive Principle* (and not figuratively as the Effects of it) has sometimes Intelligence or Consciousness emphatically ascribed to him in a proper Sense, as well as the First and Second: As when 'tis said, *The Spirit searcheth all Things, even the deep Things of God.* Which sufficiently demonstrates his proper Personality.

But here I apprehend it may be queried, If the Divine *Will* (or *Volitive Power*) be the *Active Principle* represented under the Character of the *Father* or *First Person* of the Sacred Trinity, how comes *Will* to be ascribed to the *Holy Spirit* or *Third Person*, as distinguished from the *Father*? Is He not said to *distribute Gifts to every Man severally as he will?* 1 Cor. xii. 11.

I answser, This is no real Difficulty. For even Inanimate Things, in the Figurative Style (which is so frequently used in the Scriptures) have sometimes Will and other Vital Powers ascribed to them. For Example: A Will is ascribed

PART ascribed to the Wind; for 'tis said, *The Wind bloweth where it listeth*, i. e. where it will. Much rather then may Will in the Figurative Style, be ascribed to the Holy Spirit, who is a properly Vital Principle. Nor can the Personality of the Holy Spirit be therefore said to be imperfect, because without a distinct *Will* or *Volitive Power*. For a *Volitive Power* is not necessary to the Perfection of the Personality, though it be necessary to the Perfection of the Nature or Essence. Only Intelligence is necessary to Personality; for as much as an *Intelligent Supposit* (or Subject) is allowed to be a perfect Person.

It may be further objected, that if there is but One Divine *Will* or *Volitive Faculty*, and if that *Will* is what is represented to us under the Character of the *Father*, it then follows, that the Second and Third Persons cannot act any otherwise than as they are influenced by the *Father* or First Person.

I answer, This Objection is so far from casting any Obscurity on the Doctrine of the Sacred Trinity, that, according to the present Scheme, it greatly illustrates it.

'Tis generally agreed, that there is but One Divine *Will* or *Volitive Power*, and from thence 'tis usually inferred,

red, that whatever is will'd, is will'd PART by all the Divine Persons in one indi-  
visible ACT. But, according to this In-  
ference, it cannot be apprehended how  
the Divine Actions should be primarily  
ascribed to the Father, as we find they  
are. Whereas, if the Divine Principle  
of Willing be what is meant by the *Fa-*  
*ther*, then it may very well be conceiv-  
ed, how all the Divine Actions should  
be thus primarily ascribed to Him, as  
being the First-moving Principle. It  
may then very well be conceived how  
the *Father* should be said to have *Cre-*  
*ated the Worlds* by his Word and Spirit,  
to have *sent* the Son, and to have *sent*  
and *poured out* the Spirit, and the like.  
And thus the seeming Subordination of  
the Three Co-equal and Coessential  
Persons in the Divine Oeconomy, will,  
on this Supposition, be sufficiently ac-  
counted for. Which cannot but reflect  
great Light on this Venerable Doc-  
trine.

Lastly, Some may object, that this  
Scheme revives the Heresy of the *Mono-*  
*thelites*, who supposed but One Will in  
*Christ*: To which, I reply, That the  
Opinion of the *Monothelites* proceeded  
from their confounding the Two Na-  
tures in *Christ*; but no such thing is  
done by the present Scheme, and con-  
sequently,

PARTsequently, it excludes both the Absurdity and Impiety of their Opinion.

II. This Scheme perfectly agrees with the Terms in which the Divine Trinity is expressed by *Philo the Jew*, who flourished in the Reign of *Caligula*, soon after our Saviour's Crucifixion, and who has left us the fullest and clearest Account of the Traditional Doctrine of the ancient Synagogue concerning this Matter. For he represents the Trinity under the Notions of,

1.) *Dominion*, or the Governing Principle (*Ἄρχη* or *Ἐξορία* or *ἡ Δεσπότικη*.)

2) *Reason* (*Ἄλγος*) which he says was the Instrument wherewith God (*viz.* the *Father*) made the Worlds, and which he notwithstanding calls *God*. He likewise represents the Second Principle as the Uniting Principle, or the Band of Union between the First and Third: Which is particularly remarkable, and cannot perhaps be imagined to have been for any other Reason than this, *viz.* because the Intelligence, or mutual Consciousness which unites the Sacred Three, was conceived by the *Jews* to be (as it were) Radically or Fundamentally in the Second Principle; for as much as Intelligence or Consciousness is included in the very Notion of *Reason*.

3.) *Goodness*

3.) *Goodness* (Αγαθός) or *Beneficence* PART  
(Εὐεγέρεια) or the Operative Principle II.  
of All Good.

The like Agreement may be observed with regard to the Doctrine of the *Platonists*, who, (as we may gather from *Chalcidius* \*) represented the Trinity (the Order being only somewhat inverted) under the Notions of *The Commanding Principle*, *The Ordering and Disposing Principle*, and, *The Influating Principle*, or *the Soul of the World*, which actuates the entire Frame of Nature. Which Expressions both of *Philo* and the *Platonists* are plainly reducible to the *Volitive*, *Imaginative* and *Executive Powers*.

So that here seems to be a very remarkable Concurrence of Scripture, Reason and the Testimony of Antiquity. The Evidence from Reason may be summed up thus : Whatever is necessarily included in the most Rational Conception that we can form of Perfection, may, and must be supposed by us to be included in the Nature of the Divine or most Perfect Being. But a Trinity of Personalities is necessarily included in the most Rational Conception that we can form of Perfection. Therefore a Trinity

\* Chalcid. ad Timaeum.

PART II. parity of Persons may, and must be supposed by us to be included in the Nature of the Divine or most Perfect Being. Consequently, the Trinity of Persons which is taught by the *Christian Revelation*, ought to be so far from prejudicing us against *Christianity*, that it ought rather to recommend it to our Belief and Esteem.

As for the Communication of the Divine Essence from the Father to the Son, and from Both to the Holy Spirit by Eternal Generation and Spiration, 'tis an Opinion that appears to have been chiefly propagated by the less ancient Fathers and the Schoolmen. For as the Scriptures yield no Proof, so 'tis well known that many of the most ancient Fathers \*, are wholly silent as to such a Communication. On the contrary, those Fathers (who seem to have had no Notion of an Eternal Ideal World) are observed to represent the Generation of the Son as Temporary, and as something analogous to the forming of an Idea in the Mind. For an Idea formed through the Influence of the Will, becomes, as it were, the Issue or Off-spring of the Will. Now, though the Opinion of these primitive Fathers proves

\* Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, Hippolitus, Tertullian, &c.

proves nothing in a positive Way, yet PART it must be allowed, to make it highly probable in the Negative, that there was no genuine Tradition of such Communication of the Divine Essence in the primitive Church. So that here the Silence both of Scripture and Oral Tradition appears to leave sufficient Room for Conjecture and Reasoning.

As for the Union between the Second Person of the Sacred Trinity and the Humane Nature of *Christ* (which is freely confessed, to be Part of the *Christian Revelation*) all that we are required by the Scriptures to believe is :

1.) That God being willing to discover the Heinousness or Evil of Sin, and at the same Time, to set both his Justice and his Mercy in the clearest Light, insisted on a Propitiation or Atonement by Sacrifice.

2.) That One of Humane Race, who was perfectly Innocent, and united to the Second of the Sacred Three, became a Voluntary Sacrifice for the Attainment of those Ends.

As to what regards the Manner of this Union between a Divine Person and the Humanity of *Christ*, all that the Scriptures direct us to believe, is humbly conceived to be no more than this.

I                    1.) That

PART 1.) That the Humanity of Christ  
II. was in such a peculiar Manner, as it  
were, inhabited by the Deity, and so  
particularly assumed by the *Logos* or Se-  
cond Person (yet without Confusion of  
Properties) that his Body is styled a  
Temple, and the Divine *Logos*, or  
*Word*, or *Reason*, is said (in a Figura-  
tive Sense) to have been *made Flesh*,  
and to have *dwelt amongst Men*.

2.) That, upon this Inhabitation  
and Union, very wonderful Works were  
done, and such Words were uttered as  
no mere Creature could have spoken of  
himself without the utmost Impiety  
and Blasphemy.

3.) That by Virtue of this Union  
(which is Personal and Perpetual)  
*Christ* was qualified (agreeably to the  
ancient Types and Prophecies) not  
only to give Satisfaction by suffering  
for the Sins of Men, but likewise to  
assume the Divine Names, Titles and  
Attributes, and to become a proper  
Object of Religious Worship.

What there is in this Account that can  
be justly termed Unreasonable, 'tis im-  
possible to conceive. If therefore such  
a Personal Union as infers no Confusion  
of Properties (which Sort of Union no  
Man can prove to be a Contradiction  
or absolute Impossibility) appears to  
be

be taught by a Revelation, so well attested, and in every respect so worthy of God, it ought to be believed with the utmost Humility and Gratitude.

## S E C T. VIII.

ANOTHER Important Article of the Christian Revelation, which has been misrepresented as Absurd or Unreasonable, is that of the *Fall*.

Though, with some Men of Letters, we should allow the History of the *Fall*, in the *Old Testament*, to be, in some Respects, Allegorical, yet even the Allegory must be supposed to be founded on some real Fact, and can import no less, than that our Common Parents did actually disobey some Divine Command.

That *Adam* in disobeying that Command acted as a publick Person, or as the Common Representative of his Natural Posterity is usually and clearly inferred from several Expressions to be met with in the *New Testament* (particularly in *Rom.* ver. 15. to ver. 20.) But there is sufficient Room for Dispute concerning the Consequences of his Disobediences in that publick Capacity. For though it is abundantly clear that there was an Imputation of *Adam's* Offence to all his Natural Po-

PART sterity, (as likewise of the Righteousness of Christ, (of whom *Adam* is said to have been a Type or Figure) to All his Spiritual Off-spring) yet there are many Reasons which may incline one to suppose, it's Consequences were no more than Exclusion from the Terrestrial Paradise, together with Corporal Death and other Temporal Evils.

This Hypothesis, is what I shall undertake (with all due Submission) to defend and illustrate. For neither the Nature of God, nor of the Offence committed (it being, as it seems, not the Transgression of a Natural Law, but of a Positive Precept, the Importance of which was, probably, unknown) appears to admit of a greater Penalty than what is Corporal and Temporal : As we shall more particularly observe elsewhere. Besides, if the Consequences of *Adam's* Offence were any thing more than Temporal Penalties, how could God's *Free Gift* be said to have so much abounded as the Apostle *Paul*, Rom. v. 15. affirms it did? If, as some suppose, the Temporal Death of All his Posterity (some Few only excepted) the Spiritual Death of All his Natural or Ordinary Descendants, and the Eternal Death of the far greater Part (not excepting Infants) be

be the Consequences of *Adam's Sin*, PART  
how can the Effects of *Christ's Satisfaction* be said to exceed, to equal, or even to come into Competition with them? Whereas, if (agreeably to the plain Sense of the Scriptures) we suppose the Consequences of *Adam's Offence* to have been only the Forfeiture of the Happiness of the Paradisiacal State, Corporal Death and other Temporal Evils, this great Difficulty, as well as others, will be removed, and the Doctrine of the Fall, will, perhaps, be found to be not only reconcileable to, but to contain the clearest Display of the Wisdom, Goodness and Justice of God. For, on this Supposition, we may conceive Matters to have stood thus:

The Almighty having decreed to produce a Creature qualified for Immortality, who was to be the Root of an entire Species of Beings; and foreseeing that, (since they were designed to be Intelligent and Free Agents) it was possible that many (if not All) of them might (in their peculiar Circumstances) fall short of their Chief Happiness, (which, as we have observed, could not but be connected with Obedience to the Creator's Will;) and being not inclined to expose a whole Species to so

**PART** great a Danger: It therefore pleased  
II. him to appoint their Common Parent  
(who on divers Accounts could not  
fail of being better qualified than any  
of his Natural Posterity) to be, for  
once, their Representative. On his  
Obedience, he decreed to repute them  
All obedient; and, in case of his Dis-  
obedience, to look on them All (tho'  
without their Consent) as Parties in  
the same Offence. That he might justly  
do so, he ordained that the Loss of  
Paradise, Death and the other ordina-  
ry Temporal Evils which were to be  
the Penalty annex'd to their Common  
Parent's Disobedience, should be more  
than recompensed by a much greater  
Good. For in case of Disobedience,  
he ordained that (after divers prepara-  
tory Revelations of his Will) One of  
Humane Race (being qualified in an  
extraordinary Manner for that Purpose)  
should become both a perfect Teacher  
and Example of Virtue and Obedience,  
and likewise a Sacrifice; not only to  
shew the Heinousness of Disobedience  
in general, but to expiate the Guilt of  
future Disobedience, which (not with-  
out his Consent) should be imputed to  
Him. And in Consideration of his su-  
perabundant Merits, it pleased God  
not only to decree to raise the Bodies  
of

of Men from the Sleep of Death, but PART to elect some of the Humane Race to II. Certain, Eternal Happiness (to be enjoyed after Death in a better World) and likewise to ordain that even those who were not thus elected, should be ordinarily favoured with such a particular State of Trial, wherein they should be rendered capable of Forgiveness and eternal Happiness, even after manifold, repeated personal Offences, in certain Cases, and on certain Conditions; in the Performance of which they might expect a Supply of Divine Aid, and to the Performance of which even Death and all the other Temporal Evils, which were the Consequences of the Fall should be rendered subservient. And as for the Case of Infants and others who are incapable of the State of Trial, we can (according to these Principles) have no Reason to doubt of their eternal Happiness.

This Explanation (which is chiefly built on the Principle, that Free or Indetermined Acts, are no capable Objects of Necessary or Determinate Fore-knowledge \*) as it clears the Difficulties with reference to the Fall and Restitution of Man, so it yields a satisfactory

\* Impartial Enquiry, p. 91, 182.

PART factory Account of the Fall and Ruin;

II. of the Apostate Angels (which are  
Two other important Discoveries made  
by the *Christian Revelation.*) And  
these Events by being compared, will,  
we conceive, sufficiently illustrate each  
other.

The Scriptures represent God's ordain-  
ing an Expiation in the Case of lapsed  
or fallen Man, as a peculiar Instance  
of his Goodness. They inform us,  
That though those superiour Beings  
known to us by the Name of Angels,  
fell in great Numbers from their Ori-  
ginal State, thro' Disobedience to the  
Will of the Supreme Lawgiver, yet  
He never pitied them so far as to af-  
ford them any extraordinary Means  
of Recovery from their lapsed State.  
Which different Conduct towards Be-  
ings who were so very Noble and Va-  
luable a Part of the Creation, may be  
accounted for not only from the aggra-  
vating Circumstances with which their  
Disobedience was attended, but like-  
wise from their wanting a Common  
Representative. For as the Humane  
Species, who without their Consent,  
were subjected to the Penalty incurred  
by their Representative, were more  
pitiable than the Angels, who became  
guilty through the Obliquity of their  
own

own Wills; so the Divine Conduct in PART thus subjecting Mankind to innumerable Calamities for the Offence of another, would not have appeared so reconcileable to our Notions of perfect Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, had it not been rendered the Means of some greater Good. \* Notwithstanding which, *Christ* may be very fitly styled the *Free Gift* of God, in as much as nothing but the pure Goodness of God could dispose him to provide so superabundant a Compensation for the Evils occasioned by the Fall of the Humane Representative.

The Reasons which we may suppose to have inclined the Beneficent Creator to appoint a Common Representative for Men and not for Angels, are such as follow:

1.) The Humane Species was to be successively propagated; but the Angels co-existed, as being all of them the Products of immediate Creation: On which account, it seems not to have been so proper to appoint a Common Representative for them, since they were all actually in Being and capable of a Probation or Tryal of their Obedience in their own Persons.

2.) The

\* See the Impartial Enquiry, p. 94.

PART 2.) The appointing of a Representative so peculiarly qualified as to his Person and Circumstances, had an evident Tendency to the Benefit of the Humane Species; whereas the appointing a Representative seems not to have been so well adapted to the Benefit of the Angels. For (if all of the same Species) there is no Necessity to suppose any one of them to have been better qualified for Obedience than the others, for as much as neither his natural Faculties nor his Circumstances can be made appear to have given him any peculiar Advantage. And if we suppose them to be of different Species, we can have no Reason to think it would have been more proper on that account, to have constituted either one or more Representatives.

3.) To have left Mankind to their particular Trials, would have been to expose them to too manifest a Danger, not only because they were probably the lowest or least perfect Species of Intelligent Creatures, but likewise because the far greater Part of them were to exist in such Times when the grateful Memory of the Creation was likely to wear off, and when Ignorance, Prejudice and evil Examples would be apt to set a wrong Byas on the Affections.

fections. But the Case of the Angels PART was very different. For (as far as we can judge) they were the noblest and most perfect of Creatures, and therefore the least liable so weakly and foolishly to rebel against their Maker. There was no Tempter as yet, and All of them were the immediate Off-spring of the Deity, and consequently, under the most sensible Obligations to Gratitude and Obedience. On all which Accounts, the Danger cannot be apprehended to have been so great as in the Case of Mankind.

Thus, I humbly conceive, it appears that the same Original Fitness which was founded on the necessary Relation between the Great Creator and his Intelligent Creatures, and which demonstrates the Necessity of his subjecting them to a Tryal of Obedience, serves likewise to demonstrate the Necessity of his subjecting both the Angelick Species to a Personal Trial, and the Humane Species to a Trial in a Representative: For as much as, in every Case, what is really most fit or conducive to the Attainment of his most Wise and Beneficent Ends, cannot but be necessary to the Supreme and most Perfect Being. Consequently, the Account which the *Christian Revelation*

PART *Revelation* gives of the Fall of Man-II. kind in a Representative, is, in Reality, so far from invalidating it's Pretensions to the Authority of a Divine Revelation, that it strongly supports them.

Such who maintain that the Consequences of *Adam's* Disobedience were not only Temporal, but Spiritual and Eternal Death, suppose Spiritual Death to consist in a Moral Inability to all that is Good, and a Proneness to all that is Evil. This Spiritual Death, or Original Corruption, they conceive to have been propagated from the first of Mankind to all of merely Humane Race, and to be as the Root of every evil Thought, Word and Action, and of all other Evils both Temporal and Eternal.

But to explain this Propagation of the supposed Original Corruption, has been almost as great a Difficulty as to reconcile it to the Justice and Goodness of God.

Such of the more Ancient Fathers who held the Propagation of Original Sin or Corruption as a positive Quality inclining Men to Evil, held likewise, that the Souls of Men were Material and traduced or propagated from their Parents together with their Bodies:

dies: Upon which Foot, the Opinion of the Propagation of Original Corruption appeared to be defensible. *PART II.*  
But after the Doctrine of the immediate Creation and Infusion of a pure Soul into the Body prevailed, the Defenders of that Opinion found themselves bewildered in inextricable Difficulties. Their Assertion was, That pure Souls became infected by a corrupt or infected Body, in the same manner as good Wine by a tainted Cask. But to explain how the Body could be infected with a Moral Contagion, or in what manner it could communicate it to the Soul, was such a Task, that St. Austin was obliged to confess, *that he could never find, either by Reading, Praying or Reasoning, how the Propagation of Original Sin could be defended on the Foot of the Creation of Souls* \*.

Some of the Moderns, on the contrary, conceiving Original Righteousness under the Notion of a Positive Quality inclining our first Parents to Good, suppose Original Sin to be propagated not as any thing Positive, but as a mere Privation; or in other Words, they

\* Nequè legendo, nequè orando, nequè ratiocinando invenire potui quomodo cum Auimarum Creatione Peccatum Originis defendatur. *Epiſt. 157. ad Op̄atum.*

PART they suppose the Corruption or Disorder of Humane Nature by the Fall to have proceeded merely from the Loss of Original Righteousness.

But, according to this Account, the Pravity of *Adam's* Offence is not, properly speaking, propagated at all; only we are, by reason of his Offence, deprived of that supposed Original Righteousness which they imagine would have been as a Sort of Byass inclining us to Good. However, this they think as effectually explains the Matter as the Propagation or Conveyance of a positive evil Quality (had there been any such) could have done. For, say they, as a Stone suspended by a String, is by it's own Weight carried downwards, if the String be broken or loosed, merely through the Want of that which prevented it's falling; so our Souls (on account of the Sin of our First Parent) being deprived of Original Righteousness, are easily over-born by Temptations, and as it were, carried downwards to earthly Things.

But, with Submission, what Reason have we to admit of any other Notion of Original Righteousness than what consists in Innocence, and the regular Subjection of the Passions to Reason? What Necessity for supposing any Power

er superadded to the natural Power PART  
of *Adam*? Will not the Supposition II.  
of such a superadded Power seem  
to imply, that Man at his Creation  
(though free from all evil Habits and  
vicious Inclinations) had not in his  
Nature a sufficient Power to attain  
the End of his Creation? But this  
would be a gross Impeachment of the  
Wisdom of his Creator.

Monsieur *Abbadie* frames another Hypothesis. He supposes, That the Organs of our First Parents Bodies were disordered by the first Rebellion of their Thoughts, and that this Disorder, being propagated to their natural Posterity, Sin, like a Leprosy, was propagated likewise, as proceeding from those disordered Organs. But his Hypothesis is contrary to Scripture in setting *Eve* on an equal Foot with *Adam*, by whom alone Sin (as a publick Evil) entred into the World. Besides, the supposed Disorder of our bodily Organs cannot be the Pravity of the Original Sin, though it may, perhaps, be conceived as the Occasion of Actual Sin. And though we should admit this Hypothesis to be more agreeable to Reason than either of the former; yet it may deserve to be considered, whether Experience discovers such

PART covers such a Total Depravation or Corruption of our Natures as is supposed.

It is not pretended, that any of our external Senses are either lost or much impaired by the Fall. Our Senses must therefore be owned to be capable of transmitting the same Ideas to the Understanding as those of *Adam* while he preserved his Integrity; and by Consequence, if we cannot at present judge rightly of some Things merely for want of sufficient Ideas, 'tis plain, the Case of Mankind, in that respect, was ever the same as now. And as for the Faculties of the Soul; our Judgments, though not always equally vigorous, are, for ought appears, still sufficiently capable of reflecting on the Ideas transmitted by the external Senses, and likewise of discerning and determining concerning the Agreement or Disagreement of any Ideas, whether received by Way of Sensation or Reflection. Our Wills, though often influenced by the Force of ungoverned Passions, excited by strong Impressions made by sensible Objects on our bodily Organs, have still a Liberty of Choosing; or (to speak in the Words of St. Paul) *To Will is still present with us*, and if (as the same inspir'd Writer expresses it) *we know not how to perform*,

perform (or if our Passions are not sub- PART  
servient to our most reasonable Choice) II.  
this may be owing to vicious Habits of ~~W~~  
our own contracting, (by our being ac-  
customed to do *Evil*, as the Scripture  
expresses it) and not to any supposed  
Disorder of our Bodily Organs derived  
from our Common Parents: as will be  
shewn.

There is yet another noted Hypo-  
thesis, *viz.* that of Father *Mallebrance*.  
He supposes a certain Disorder of our  
Nature (occasioned by the Fall) which  
consists in our Souls being deprived by  
God of the Power of effectually curb-  
ing the Motions of the Animal Spirits  
when excited by evil Objects; or in  
their being bereaved of that Dominion  
over the bodily Organs, which he con-  
ceives to have originally belonged to  
our Nature, and to be of absolute Ne-  
cessity to break the Force, and prevent  
the Effects of Temptations. So that,  
according to this Opinion, God, as a  
Punishment for one Sin committed by  
a Representative, reduced Mankind to  
such a preternatural State as subjected  
them to a continual Necessity of sinning.  
But what is this less than to make the  
Most Holy God the Author of Sin?

'Tis confessed, that the Scriptures  
speak of a very great and general Dis-  
order

PART order and Corruption ; but they no  
T. I. where expressly derive it from the Prop-  
agation of Original Sin. By *Adam*,  
tis said, *Sin entered into the World* ; in  
*him we were made Sinners* ; and conse-  
quently, *were conceived and born in Sin* ;  
and, *because we all have sinned*, *Death*  
*passes upon all* : But these Expressions  
do not necessarily prove the Propagati-  
on of Sin, but appear to import an  
Imputation only. And if some Texts  
seem to favour the Supposition of a to-  
tal Incapacity to all that is Good (which  
Incapacity may be conceived as the Ef-  
fect of such Propagation) they may ei-  
ther signify our entire Dependance on  
the Divine Sustentation, by which our  
very Beings are preserved, and with-  
out which tis certain, we can do no-  
thing ; or else they may be figurative  
Expressions ; the rather, because the  
Scriptures (which on other Occasions  
plainly assert our natural Powers) are  
well known to abound with Figures,  
in the present Case. Thus, when we  
are said to be *dead in Trespasses and*  
*Sins* ; when Sin is said to *live and reign*  
in us ; and when it is represented as  
a Person with a *Body and Variety of*  
*Members*, and is said to *dwell in us*, no-  
thing can be more plain than that these  
Expressions are figurative. And thus  
when

when it is said, that we can do nothing P A R T  
of ourselves; that there is none that doth  
good; that in us dwelleth no good Thing; H.  
that the Natural (or rather the Sensual)  
Man, cannot know the Things of God;  
that we are created in Christ Jesus to  
good Works, and the like, 'tis rea-  
sonable to think these Expressions are also  
figurative. For no Wonder if he that  
is sometimes said to be dead, is at  
other times represented as incapable  
of Acting, or if he that is said to be  
possessed by Sin, is by the same Figure  
described as void of all Good, or if  
the Divine Concourse towards the ex-  
citing and confirming good Inclina-  
tions in us, be represented as a new  
Creation.

In like manner, when Christ says,  
He came to seek and to save that which  
was lost; this is plainly an Allusion to  
lost or strayed Sheep, and imports only  
the very general Deviation of Man-  
kind, before Christ's Appearance, from  
the Paths of Virtue. And when the  
Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Eph-  
esians says, We were by Nature Children  
of Wrath even as others; the plain Mean-  
ing is, that in the State of Nature (i.e.  
before they received the Grace to be-  
lieve and submit to the Laws of Christ)  
they followed the same vicious Courses,

PART and were on that account equally obnoxious to the Effects of the Divine Dis-

pleasure with others of the degenerate Race of Men: For this is what is imported by the *Hebraism, Children of Wrath.* And Lastly, When *Job* puts the Questions, *Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean?* And, *What is Man that he should be clean, and he which is born of a Woman that he should be righteous?* These Expressions, which in a figurative Sense, speak of Actual Sin or Unrighteousness under the Notion of *Uncleanness*, may only signify, that the Passions, which (as far as they depend on the Body) may be said to be derived from our immediate Parents, cannot but be subject to receive and communicate a wrong Byass to the Actions, and so to render sinless Perfection in Effect impossible in this corrupt State of the World.

That the Propensity of Men to Evil, and their Aversion to that which is Good (which even those figurative Expressions cannot but import to be very great and general) may be accounted for without supposing any Propagation of Original Sin or Moral Disorder will perhaps, appear from the following Remarks.

Though

Though the Charms of Virtue are PART real, yet they are chiefly to be discerned by an intellectual Eye: Whereas THE the false Allurements of Vice are obvious to Sense, and for that Reason, are apt to make earlier and deeper Impressions. 'Tis not, ordinarily, without the Advantages of a good Education, and the serious Exercise of Reason, that we come to discern the Beauties, and, in any Degree, to submit to the Dominion of Virtue: But Vice by its agreeable Attacks upon our outward Senses, prevails very early and strongly on the Principle of Self-love, which is as the Root of all the other Passions, and thus almost forces itself upon us under the specious Disguise of Good. By which Means, evil Habits very often take Possession of us insensibly before we come to the due Exercise of Reason, and by Degrees impress so strong a Byass on the Passions, that, even afterwards, when we come to discern our Mistakes, we may say, with *Medea*,

*Video Meliora proboque,  
Deteriora Sequor.*

Thus the irregular Inclinations of Children (which some imagine to spring immediately from the Root of original

Corruption)

K 3

PART Corruption) seem to be no other  
 II. than the Motions of that Self-love,  
 which was originally implanted in  
 us, for our Benefit, by the Great  
 Author of Nature. For even this na-  
 tural, and therefore innocent, Princi-  
 ple (through their unavoidable want of  
 a due Notion of Right and Wrong) is  
 apt to break out into petty Irregulari-  
 ties. And as for the viler Actions of  
 Persons of riper Years, they seem to  
 spring from the same Principle of Self-  
 love, either not rightly understood, or  
 else perverted by evil Habits. For as a  
 Child, moved by the Principle of Self-  
 love, takes away a Trifle, not knowing  
 that it is an Invasion of another's Pro-  
 perty, or hates his Tutor, through the  
 influence of the same Principle, for  
 obliging him to do what he imagines  
 (though falsely) to be inconsistent with  
 his Interest; so a Robber, moved by  
 the very same Principle, takes what be-  
 longs to another, and perhaps deprives  
 him of Life; and all from a false Noti-  
 on of Interest. And such Practices may,  
 in time, produce such an Habit as shall  
 seem like a second Nature.

But whatever may be the Principle of  
 evil Actions, it is to be confessed that  
 the Divine Concourse or Assistance  
 must be supposed to contribute to every

Good

Good Action: But then this doth not PART exclude, but rather corroborates, the II. Supposition of our being possess'd of our natural Powers. Of the Reason of this Divine Assistance we have treated already.

But this may be sufficient to justify the *Christian Revelation* in Teaching the Imputation of Original Sin, and to vindicate it from the Charge of favouring the Opinion of it's Propagation.

## S E C T. IX.

THE Resurrection of the same Body, is another Article of the *Christian Revelation*, of which I shall undertake to shew the Reasonableness. And this I shall do, both by proving the Usefulness of the Doctrine, and likewise the Fitness and Possibility of the Thing.

Before the Appearance of the *Christian Revelation* in the World, some of the wisest Philosophers expressed themselves, at times, somewhat dubiously concerning the natural Immortality of the Humane Soul, and a future State of Retribution; and even a whole Sect among the Jews (viz. the *Sadducees*) denied Both. But the Revelation of *Christ*, not only establishes the Soul's Immortality, but puts the Doctrine of a

PART future State of Retribution farther out  
II. of Doubt, by asserting the Resurrec-  
tion of the Body more clearly and expli-  
citely than the Jewish *Revelation* had  
done. For though the Belief of the  
Soul's Immortality is sufficient to an-  
swer all the Ends of Religion, yet we  
find that not only among the Vulgar,  
but even among the Pretenders to Phi-  
losophy, there have been, and still are,  
some People of gross Apprehensions  
who cannot easily be persuaded that an  
Immaterial Soul can either perceive or  
act any Thing in a State of Separation  
from it's Body. The Revelation there-  
fore of this Doctrine of a Resurrection,  
superadded to that of the Soul's Immor-  
tality, must be allowed to have been of  
great Use to give Satisfaction to this  
Sort of Men, who must otherwise  
have still doubted of a future Retribu-  
tion. And was it only on this account,  
the ordaining and revealing a Resur-  
rection of the Body was certainly most  
worthy of the Wisdom of God.

The Reasons which may be assigned  
for the Fitness of the Thing (chiefly  
with regard to Good Men) are the fol-  
lowing :

1.) Bodily Death being one of the  
Consequences of the Fall, and *Christ*  
being sent to make sufficient, and even  
abundant

abundant Reparation for all the Evils PART  
occasioned by the Fall, it was very fit III  
that he should bring about the Resur- res  
rection of the Body. (incompt. A. 22)

2.) The strong Inclination of the Soul to continue in the State of Union (notwithstanding the many Diseases and Inconveniences that attend it) proves a State of Separation from the Body not to be a Natural, but a Violent State, and therefore not to be ultimately designed by the Author of Nature.

3.) The Soul being originally designed to inhabit a Body, may well be thought to have, even in the separate State, a strong Propension towards Reunion; which Propension, being natural, we may reasonably suppose will not be frustrated.

4.) Yet since these gross and unwieldy Bodies of ours may be thought, in some sort to hinder, rather than promote the Action of their Spiritual Inhabitants, therefore it is not unreasonable to suppose (in Consistence with the *Christian Revelation*) that the Body at the Time of it's Re-union will be rendered a more convenient Habitation for the Soul.

The Three last Reasons, I conceive, are such as would dispose Men to believe the Resurrection, tho' it

PART it had never been any Part of a Divine  
III. Revelation. For even some of the wiser  
Heathens (convinced by these or the  
like Arguments) appear to have had  
some Notion of it.

Tho' such who have suffered their  
Reason to be debauched to the Disser-  
vice of Religion, have ever struck  
chiefly at the Belief of a future State,  
and therefore have made their strong-  
est Efforts against the Immortality of  
the Soul and the Resurrection of the  
Body; yet I cannot perceive that they  
have been able to find above one plau-  
sible Objection against the Possibility  
of the Resurrection. The Objection is  
grounded on the Supposition of one  
Body's contributing to the Nourish-  
ment of another, and becoming Part  
of it's Substance; from whence 'tis in-  
ferred, that the same Parts, belonging  
to two Bodies, cannot, without a Con-  
tradiction, be affirmed capable of being  
restored to both.

But this Knot is not difficult to  
untie. For though we should sup-  
pose (as we have no Necessity to do)  
that all the grosser Parts of our Bodies  
shall be raised, yet 'tis certain, that as  
God, being Omniscent, cannot but  
know all the Parts of which our Bodies  
consist, so being likewise Omnipotent,

He

He cannot want the Means both to prevent the Confusion of the Parts of different Bodies, and to re-unite those of the same Body.

But, possibly, the Resurrection of the same Body may be accounted for in a Philosophical Way, without supposing any extraordinary Interposition of the Divine Providence to prevent such a Confusion of Bodies.

For, as in every Seed there is contained a certain minute Part, which (as appears from Microscopical Observations) is the entire future Plant in Miniature, and the immediate Seat of that spirituous Substance to be found in all Seeds, and which, when the other Parts of the Seed are corrupted, increases and displays itself by Degrees, so this gross Body of ours (like the grosser Part of a Seed) is probably but as the Husk, or Shell, or Case of some very minute Principle, which cannot either receive Nourishment itself, or become Nourishment to any other such Principle, and which (probably with some additional Particles of the grosser Body) will discover itself in it's proper Form at the Resurrection.

This is no merely imaginary Scheme, but appears to be the Doctrine of St. Paul, who compares the Resurrection of

PART of the Body to the raising of a Plant

II. from a Seed. From whence it may,   
with Reason be inferred, that as the Seed (though usually, but improperly, said to come up or rise again) is not raised with all the same Substance, or in the very same Form as when sown, but the Body of the new Plant, which was contained in it, is chiefly that which is raised; so those grosser Parts, which we call the Humane Body, may not be all raised at the Resurrection, but that minute Part (which is most properly the Humane Body, as being the immediate Habitation or Seat of the Soul) may be chiefly that which shall then be raised.

This Body, on account of its Subtilty, may deserve the Denomination of a *Spiritual Body*, and may be supposed to resemble those Etherial Vehicles with which the *Platonists* were wont to accommodate Incorporeal Beings. Nor can it well be conceived, that the highest Perfection of Humane Souls in a better World should consist in their being eternally link'd to Bodies of Flesh and Blood; Bodies, of which the wisest of the Philosophers have complained as of Prisons or living Sepulchres of the Soul. Agreeably to which, the Scripture says, *We that are in this Tabernacle*

bernacle (or Body) do groan, being bur- PART  
thened, not for that we would be un- II.  
cloathed, (or stripp'd of all Body) but so cloathed upon as Mortality may be  
swallowed up of Life.

SECT. X.

THE Doctrine of *Eternal Punishment* (though not peculiar to the *Jewish* and *Christian Revelations*, but taught even by the *Pagans* in certain Cases) has likewise been made the Subject of Debate.

'Tis indeed both Unreasonable and Unscriptural to assert, in a proper Sense, that the most Beneficent of Beings, the Common Father of Mankind, takes Pleasure in the Misery even of his Disobedient Off-spring. If therefore some Men of more Zeal than either Learning or Prudence, have explained any of the figurative Expressions of the Scriptures relating to *Eternal Punishment* in such a Sense, they must be owned to have given just Cause of Offence.

*Origen*, on the contrary, and some others have not only looked upon the Descriptions of the future State of Punishment in the Scriptures to be (as they certainly are) figurative, but have been inclined to believe, that the

Words

PART Words which are understood to signify  
 II. it's eternal Duration ought to be taken  
 ~~~ in a limited Sense, as importing only a  
 long Term of Time. But since the  
 Duration of the State of Misery is ex-  
 pressed by the very same Words which  
 are used to denote the Eternity of the  
 State of Happiness, 'tis sufficiently  
 clear, that the same unlimited Dur-  
 ation is meant in both Cases.

Others (being zealous for what they  
 conceived to be the Doctrine of the  
 Scriptures) have attempted to assign  
 Reasons for the immediate inflicting  
 of Positive Punishments to Eternity.  
 These Reasons we shall briefly consider.  
 But it will be proper to premise Two  
 Things. 1. ~~to prove that the Notion of Justice or Equity is consistent with the infinite Duration of Punishment.~~ That we have a true Notion of  
 Justice or Equity, may be inferred from  
 the Appeal which the Great God is re-  
 presented as making in the Scriptures  
 even to sinful Men, inviting them to  
 judge, as it were, of the Equity of his  
 Proceedings, and the Iniquity of their  
 own: *Are not my Ways equal, are not  
 yours unequal?* &c. 2. Our Notion of strict Justice or  
 Equity with regard to Punishment, is,  
 that it consists in duly proportioning  
 the Punishment to the Demerit of the  
 Crime, not only as to the Kind and  
 Degree,

Degree, but likewise as to the Duration. <sup>of this punishment to vindictive</sup> ~~of this punishment to vindictive~~ <sup>of this punishment to vindictive</sup>  
The mentioned Reasons of Eternal ~~of this punishment to vindictive~~ <sup>of this punishment to vindictive</sup>  
Positive Punishment are as follows:—  
1.) Some have informed us, that the chief Reason of such Positive (as well as Negative) Eternal Punishment, i. e. of an Infinite Punishment both of *Loss* and of *Sense* (as they express it) is to be derived from the absolutely Infinite Guilt or Demerit of Sin; which Infinite Guilt they conceive to proceed from it's being committed against an Absolutely Infinite Object, and therefore to require an absolutely Infinite Punishment: Which Punishment, since it cannot, at once, be inflicted on the Offender (as being but a Finite Subject) they therefore conceive it just that he should suffer not only most exquisite but eternal Misery, to make up his Want of Capacity by the Duration of his Punishment. But certainly this cannot be any Reason, much less the chief Reason, of positive eternal Punishment; because it infers a Stoical Equality of Sins, and contradicts the Scripture by excluding the Supposition of different Degrees of Guilt and Misery. For 'tis evident that there can be no different Degrees of Guilt in Crimes that are alike Infinite.

2.) Some

PART

- 2.) Some attempt to prove the Equity of the immediate inflicting of positive Punishment to Eternity from the continual or eternal Provocations of the miserable Sinner; who being continually offending, ought, say they, to be thus continually suffering. Yet neither can this be admitted as the Reason of such eternal Punishment. For eternal Suffering in the future State is threatened as the just Consequence of Sins committed on Earth, without any reference to Crimes that may be committed hereafter.
- 3.) Others tell us, that God does no Injustice to the Wicked by thus punishing them everlasting, because 'tis the Effect of their own Choice; everlasting Happiness and Misery having been set before them, and they having rejected the one and chosen the other. But this Method of Reasoning (in the present Case) supposes the very Thing in Debate, it remaining to be proved that either Scripture or Reason teaches any such Positive eternal Misery as is here supposed to be set before Men. Besides, since the Connection between Vice and Misery, is not apparent to every one, consequently, every Man that chooses Vice cannot be properly said to choose Misery.

enior (2)

4.) Nor

4.) Nor is it sufficient to say, with PART others; that the immediate inflicting of continual positive Punishment to ~~the~~ Eternity is therefore just, because if Sinners had lived eternally on Earth, they would have sinned eternally. For admitting this Supposition to be true (which yet may be disputed) 'tis however hard to conceive the Equity of punishing Men in any manner for Sins they never committed, merely because they would have eventually committed them, had they continued in a Capacity so to do. This is to imagine that God renders to Sinners, not according to their Works (as the Scripture says he will) but according to his own Fore-knowledge.

5.) Nor can it avail to alledge, that some Sins, though committed in an Instant, are Eternal (because irreparable) Injuries; such as Murder, Adultery, &c. For (besides that this Reasoning regards only some particular Sins) it may be said, that the Irreparableness, of these Injuries in itself considered, is so far from inferring the Justice of the continual inflicting of Positive Punishment for them to Eternity, that it will not (alone) infer the Justice even of eternal Negative Punishment: For as much as the irreparable Loss or For-

L feiture

PART feiture of the Eternal or Heavenly  
 H. Felicity must be allowed to be far greater  
 than the irreparable Loss of any  
 Temporal Good, proceeding from the  
 mentioned Injuries.

It seems then, that the Opinion of  
 the Eternity of Positive Punishment  
 has no solid Foundation in Reason. Let  
 us therefore consider what is the true  
*Christian Doctrine* concerning Eternal  
 Punishment.

If we carefully reflect, we shall perhaps see Reason to conclude, as follows:

1.) 'Tis undeniable, that the Great Creator may justly exclude those from Happiness even for ever, who act contrary to their natural Obligations, either by not using, or abusing their natural Powers, with the due Exercise of which their Supreme Happiness was connected.

2.) Exclusion from Happiness cannot but produce a great Degree of Regret; which is Positive Misery, though occasioned by somewhat purely Negative.

3.) The Scripture Descriptions of the Punishment and Misery, as well as of the Happiness of the future State, are couched in figurative Terms, which excite Ideas, probably very different from the Truth of the Things.

4.) Such

4.) Such of those figurative Descriptions of the Misery of the future State of Punishment as are expressed even in the most positive Terms, (such as *ever-lasting Fire, the Worm that never dieth,* and the like) may, perhaps, not without Reason, be understood, to signify that endless Regret which cannot but result from the Loss of the greatest Happiness, and the Despair of attaining it.

5.) Where Regret and Despair are in a great Degree, there the Torment cannot but be very exquisite. For this is what we may call the Pain of the Soul, which those who have experienced it, though in less Degrees, have thought to be more intolerable than all bodily Pains.

6.) The Powers or Faculties of the Soul in the future State, being freed from the Clog of a gross Body, may well be supposed to be more active and vigorous, and more susceptible both of Pain and Pleasure; and therefore the Regret and Torment proceeding from the Loss and Despair of the Heavenly Felicity, may be conceived not to wear off, but to be (like a Fire) continually fed by the Fuel of sad Reflection for ever. And this Reflection and Regret we have Reason to believe will be more or less excited by some positive Act of

PART the offended Deity, which may be  
 II. meant by the Breath of the Lord kindling the Fire of *Tophet*.

7.) Though the immediate inflicting of positive Punishment in the future State may be thought necessary to be supposed in order to account for the different Degrees of Misery which the Scripture teaches; yet there is perhaps no Necessity to think that such Punishment will be continually inflicted to Eternity; for as much as the Negative Punishment of *Loss* (as was shewn) as well answers the Idea of a continual unquenchable Fire, as such a continual and eternal Positive Punishment of *Sense*.

8.) 'Tis reasonable to conclude, that, as after the Forfeiture of the earthly Paradise by our Common Parents, they were, on account of their Personal Offence, not only deprived of the Happiness it yielded, but were likewise justly subjected, more or less, to additional Sufferings and Distresses; so not only an Exclusion from Happiness, but a Subjection of the miserable Objects of the Divine Displeasure, in the future State, to such positive Penalties as are proportioned to the different Demerits of their respective Personal Crimes, may be supposed to consist with the strictest Equity.

SECT.

## S E C T. XI.

P A R T  
II.

W H A T has been observed, may, 'tis hoped, be sufficient to demonstrate the Reasonableness of the most Essential *Doctrines of Christianity*: We shall now proceed to consider it's *Precepts or Laws*.

The *Precepts* contained in the *Christian Revelation* are either such as are Natural, fixed and unalterable, as being immediately founded on the Immutable Nature of God, and the necessary Relation between Him and his Creatures; or else they are such as are Positive and Alterable, as being founded on the free Determination of God. In respect of the former, 'tis agreed, that the Preceptive Part of *Christianity* may be regarded as a complete Collection and perfect Explication of the Laws of Nature. In regard to the latter, it will appear, that the *Precepts* of *Christianity* are to be considered either as so many Supplements to those natural Laws, or as Helps to the obeying them.

Before we proceed to a particular Consideration of the Positive *Precepts* of *Christianity*, it may not be unnecessary to enquire into the Reasons which may modestly be supposed to have been sufficient to incline the Beneficent Deity to subject Men to any other Laws

PART besides the Natural Laws or Dictates  
II. of Reason: The rather because such  
other Laws, producing a sort of En-  
largement of our Obligations, cannot  
but render the Practice of Religion  
more difficult than when restrained to  
those few general Acts to which Na-  
ture and Reason oblige us, and by Con-  
sequence, seem to expose our Supreme  
Happiness to a greater Hazard and  
Uncertainty.

To this End it will be proper to re-  
mark, that our Obligations by the Laws  
of Nature or Reason, and by such Insti-  
tutions as are superadded by Positive  
Precepts, are very different: Our Obli-  
gation by the Former being (as was  
observed) founded on the Nature of  
God and ourselves, and the necessary  
Relation between Him and us, which  
renders the Matter of them necessarily  
Good; whereas our Obligation by the  
Latter (*viz.* by Positive Precepts) is  
founded on the free Pleasure of God  
commanding Things which had no  
Moral Goodness in themselves, but  
were of an indifferent Nature.

From hence it seems not unreasonable  
to conclude, that though the Pe-  
nalty in Case of the Violation of a Na-  
tural Law ought to be most severe, yet  
the Penalty annexed to the Transgres-  
sion of a Positive Precept may be less  
in

in a due Proportion to the Importance P A R T  
of the Precept. That it was actually II.  
so with regard to the positive Precepts *✓✓*  
of the Jewish Law, seems sufficiently  
clear. The Ceremonial Precepts of the  
*Mosaical Institution*, are well known to  
have been very numerous and burthen-  
some; in so much, that it was next to  
impossible for the utmost Diligence to  
avoid very frequent Transgressions.  
Yet notwithstanding this, the Prescrip-  
tion of those Laws or Precepts appears  
to have been very consistent with the  
Wisdom and Goodness of God. For  
by their Means the Supreme Happi-  
ness of *Abraham's* Posterity was capable  
of being promoted, but not hazarded;  
for as much as the Performance of the  
Duties required by them tended at that  
Time to several good Ends, and the  
Legal Guilt contracted by their Trans-  
gression admitted of a Real Expiation  
by the Means of other Observances of  
the same Nature, consisting in divers  
Sorts of Purifications, for the most Part,  
of little Expence and Trouble \*. For  
though the Transgression even of those  
positive Ceremonial Precepts may be  
said to have been attended with Cir-  
cumstances which may be reputed to  
have been Violations of the Natural  
Law, and by Consequence, to have

\* See Heb. ix. ver. 12.

PART produced not only what is called Legal  
II. but likewise Moral Guilt; yet since  
those Circumstances were considered as  
merely accidental to the Act, the Pe-  
nalty was notwithstanding proportioned  
only to the End and Design of the  
positive Law, of which the Act was a  
Transgression.

What has been observed of the positive Precepts of the *Jewish Revelation*, may, perhaps, be applied to divers of those Institutions which are peculiar to *Christianity*, as being of much the same Nature. For Instance, the *Christian Sacraments* (taken for the Outward and Visible Signs) though they are enjoined as having a Tendency to our Spiritual Welfare; yet they do not appear to have a necessary Connection with our Supreme Happiness. Accordingly we find the Penalty in Case of the mere Abuse or Misperformance of one of them, abstracting from the real Contempt of it, is (at least according to the Sense of the Original) no other than *Judgment*, viz. either Sickness or a more sudden Death: For thus the Great Apostle himself explains it: *For this Cause* (says he) *many are sick among you, and some sleep*. And the Reason of this seems sufficiently clear. For in judging of the different Demerit of an Offence, we are not to consider it in it's general

general Notion, or as a Violation of the P A R T Divine Authority (for in that respect, II. all Sins are equal, being equally Violations of the same Authority) but in it's particular Notion, or with relation to the Nature and End of that Law and Precept of which it is a Transgression. Accordingly, that Offence must have the greatest Demerit or Guilt which is committed against a Law which both is, and is known to be, of the greatest Importance either in itself, or in relation to the End or Design of the Great Lawgiver. But as we are not competent Judges, in every Case, of the Ends which God may have proposed in enacting positive Laws, so neither are we obliged particularly to enquire into them. Yet if the End of God in enacting any particular positive Law be revealed to be of great Importance, the wilful Violation of it cannot but have a proportionably greater Demerit. But since both the Matter and End of positive Laws (or such as proceed from the mere good Pleasure of God) are, in the general, known to be of less Importance than those of natural Laws (or such as are founded on his very Nature) their Penalties must, it seems, in the general, be supposed less severe than the Penalties annexed to the Laws of Nature.

As for that Fundamental Duty of  
*Faith,*

PART *Faith*, which was required in the Divine Commission of *Moses*, 'tis certain, that as it was almost impossible to apprehend that it should fail of being performed (by such at least who were either Eye-witnesses or otherwise well-inform'd of his Miracles) so it was the necessary Means of Obedience to the Revelation he made of the Divine Will: On both which Accounts it was very consistent with the Wisdom of God not only to require it, but to punish the Want of it in *Korah* and his Associates (as likewise in others) with the severest Temporal Calamity, even a violent Death: For there is no Necessity, perhaps, to suppose that their Punishment extended to Eternal Perdition purely on account of some Degree of Unbelief with regard to the Commission of *Moses*.

The Faith which the *Christian Revelation* requires in it's Great Revealer is indeed of a very different Kind. For this is represented as having a necessary Connection with our Chief Happiness, and is therefore required on Eternal Penalties; of such, at least, who have Capacities and Opportunities to satisfy themselves of the Truth of his Pretensions. But then this Faith is to be considered not only as the necessary Means of our Obedience to that Revelation,

Revelation, or as a mere Belief of the PART Revealer's Veracity, but likewise as importing our Acceptance of Him for our Supreme Lord; an ACT to which we were antecedently obliged by the very Law of Nature, on Supposition that his Real Divinity was discoverable by us. In this Case, *He that believeth not is condemned already, viz. by the Law of Nature.*

Though the positive Precepts of *Revealed Religion*, or it's Laws with regard to Things which were, in themselves, neither Morally Good nor Evil, but Indifferent, are not the necessary Means of attaining our Chief Happiness (and are therefore, as it seems, not enforced by Eternal Penalties) yet they either have or have had questionless very valuable Ends. For Example:

1.) They sometimes serve for Instruction. Thus the Ritual Precepts of the *Jewish Revelation* which relate to Clean and Unclean Animals, are very reasonably supposed to have Moral Significations, and to have been as so many constant Monitors with regard to Practice. Such a Method of Teaching was very suitable to the State of the *Jewish Nation* at that Time, and much resembled the Custom of the ancient Sages, who were wont to teach by Parables and Allegories, and to extract Moral Lessons from

PART from the natural Properties of Animals  
II. and Vegetables.

2.) They might serve for the Representation or Commemoration of important Events, and for the Conveyance of Spiritual Benefits. Thus the *Jewish Sabbath* and *Passover*, were instituted in Memory of the Creation of the World and the Destruction of the First-born in *Egypt*: And divers of the *Jewish Rites* and *Ceremonies* were plainly Typical Representations of future Things. And thus the *Christian Sacraments* are Signs and Seals of Spiritual Benefits, and Obligations or Engagements to the Performance of the greater Duties of Religion.

3.) For Delight. Men are usually taken with External Pomp and Ceremony. Therefore we need not wonder if the Deity, in this as well as in other Cases, condescended to accommodate his Institutions to the innocent Weaknesses of Humane Nature. Of this Sort were divers Rites of the *Mosaick Law*.

4.) For Amusement. The *Jews* were a People too much inclined to imitate the Customs of the neighbouring Nations. To prevent which, it was convenient to keep them employed in such innocent Rites and Ceremonies at home, as might afford them but little Leisure

Leisure to enquire into or adopt the PART  
evil Customs of the vicious and idola- II.  
trous Pagans.

5.) For Distinction. Such an Institution was *Circumcision*; by the means of which the *Israelitish* Nation was most effectually distinguished, and separated from the Conversation and Contagion of the Uncircumcised Idolaters.

S E C T. XII.

BESIDES a most complete Collection and perfect Explanation of the Laws of Nature, enforced by the most powerful Motives (and particularly, as we have already observed, by a much clearer Discovery not only of the Evil of Sin, but of the Mercy and Justice of God, and of a future State than either the *Jewish Revelation* or unassisted Reason ever made) *Christianity* hath given us the following Supplements to those Natural Laws.

First, As to the Duties of *Praise* and *Prayer*, *Christianity* instructs and obliges us to exercise both through the Intercession of a *Mediator*. In this indeed the *Christian* and the *Jewish Revelations* agree. In the Latter the High Priest is represented as mediating between God and the People of *Israel*: In the Former we are directed to *Christ* as the only Mediator between God and

Man

Part Man. But, whereas the Mediatorship  
of the Jewish High Priest was chiefly  
typical, that of Christ is real, and  
grounded on his own Satisfaction for  
the Sins of Men.

The Reason of this Institution ap-  
pears to be as follows. By their Dis-  
obedience Men daily offended the Just  
Governour of the World, deserving  
that neither their Praises should be ac-  
cepted nor their Prayers regarded. And  
though Repentance may in this Case  
seem to have been a sufficient Remedy,  
yet (for the more effectual discovering  
of the Evil of Disobedience, and the  
more powerful promoting of the Prac-  
tice of Obedience by a signal Display  
both of his Justice and Mercy, as well  
as for other mentioned Ends peculiar to  
the Case of fallen and degenerate Man-  
kind) God, to whom whatever is fittest  
with regard to the Attainment of his  
Ends, in due Consistence with our na-  
tural Powers, is always necessary, in-  
sisted on a proper Satisfaction: Which  
Satisfaction being given by Christ,  
He became our only Intercessor with  
God. For being the Author of that Sa-  
tisfaction or Expiation by which the  
Ends of the Divine Government were  
most effectually promoted, he could not  
but be the fittest Person to plead the  
Merits of it. Thus tho' Reason could  
not

not discover these Things, yet when dis- PART  
cover'd, it cannot but approve of them. II.

Again, The Duty of *Faith* in this only Mediator and Intercessor, as being the promised *Messias* and Saviour of the World, is, in some respect, another Supplement to the Law of Nature. For this is the Duty which the *Christian Revelation* superadds to the natural Duty of Repentance, as a Condition to qualify such, at least, who have the Means of Believing, for an Interest in the Merits of the Mediator's Satisfaction. And the Reason is clear. For such Faith is to be considered as the Fountain from whence our Obedience to the Doctrines and Institutions of our Great Mediator and Lawgiver naturally flows.

'Tis confessed, that (as we elsewhere observed) we could not, without an extraordinary Revelation, have discovered any other Means of appeasing the too often offended Deity but Repentance and Amendment only. The Custom of *Sacrificing* may seem indeed to argue it to have been the general Opinion that the Deity was to be rendered propitious by that Means. But it ever appeared to the Thinking Part of Mankind to be an Imagination no less absurd than groundless, to suppose that the Blood of Beasts should be accepted as an Equivalent for the Sins of Men.

And

**P A R T** And perhaps no more probable Account  
**II.** can be given of the Custom of Sacrificing, than that it was first derived from Revelation (as being typical of *Christ's Satisfaction*) and afterwards greedily retained by the *Pagan Priests*; who finding it profitable, represented it as the necessary Means of atoning for Sin. For that Sacrifices were used, in the Time of the *Mosaick Institution*, as visible Representations of the Demerit of Sin, and as Types of the future Sacrifice of the Redeemer, none, I think, can doubt, who believes the Epistle to the *Hebrews* to be a Part of the *Christian Revelation*. This Sacrifice of the Redeemer is therefore justly represented to be the only Propitiation for Sin, and Faith and Repentance are most fitly required as the Conditions to qualify for an Interest therein.

Another Supplement to the Law of Nature, seems to have been made by the *Christian Revelation* with regard to the natural Duty of *Patience*.

Tho' an humble or submissive Temper of Mind with respect to God in the Course of his Providence, is a Duty easily demonstrated by unassisted Reason, (as we observed in the former Part) yet Humility or Submission with regard to Evils or Injuries received from Men, was so far from being admitted by the

*Pagans*

*Pagans* as Reasonable or a Duty, that PART it was generally reputed the Effect of II. a mean and abject Spirit. For it seems, *as* they thought submitting to the righteous Will of God to be sufficiently consistent with resisting the unjust Will of Man. Yet Patience even under Injuries done us by Men, is represented by the *Christian Revelation* as a Duty very acceptable to God, and as a fit Prerequisite to our Exaltation. But though this appears to be required for a very wise and beneficial End, *viz.* for the more effectual preserving of Peace in the World, yet perhaps it could not have been made appear to be a Duty by the Exercise of Reason only. For Self-preservation and Self-defence are, in some Cases, at least, undoubted Principles of the Law of Nature; and Revenge or Retaliation of Injuries, may be speciously enough extenuated in every Case, as an Act of Justice, and accordingly, by *Aristotle* and *Cicero* 'tis ranked among the Virtues. If any of those who had no other Guide than the pure Light of Nature did, notwithstanding, practice the not-retaliating Injuries, yet who even among the Wisest and Best of the Heathens ever extended the Duty of Patience so far as to think themselves obliged to *bless those who cursed them, and to pray for them*

PART them who despitefully used and persecuted  
 II. them? Yet even this is enjoyned us  
 by an express Precept of the Law of  
 Christ.

But this *Christian* Notion of *Patience*, how extensive soever, is not perhaps unlimited, as some may imagine. To make this appear, it may be considered, that Injuries are either Publick or Private. Private Injuries (or such as immediately regard Private Persons) are either such as have no considerable Tendency to the Publick Damage, and therefore need no Cognizance of the Legislature; or else they are such, as, on account of their more direct Tendency to the Hurt of the Community, come within the Reach of Publick Laws. Those of the latter Sort may even according to the *Christian Revelation*, be retaliated by the Magistrate or publick Minister of Justice; though some contend that neither Sort may be retaliated by private Persons. But as for Publick Injuries (or such as immediately regard the Community) they appear to be of a very different Nature. For tho' a Private Person may be conceived to be obliged to recede from his own Right even of Defending himself, in some Cases, with a View to the Publick Good, by a Revelation that is Divine, yet it cannot well be imagin'd that

a Man of a publick Character should be P A R T  
obliged by a Revelation that proceeds  
from God, tamely to give up the Rights  
of the Publick with which he is en-  
trusted. A well-regulated Govern-  
ment is the common Natural Right of  
Mankind, and indeed, in some respect,  
the greatest of Temporal Blessings ; it  
being that which secures to us the  
Possession and Enjoyment of all other  
Blessings. Therefore for a Person in a  
Publick Capacity to contribute to the  
giving up what is the Common Right,  
and the Greatest Temporal Good by  
patiently suffering such Injuries as are  
destructive of it, is in Effect to do the  
greatest Injury and Mischief. But to  
ordain the greatest of Temporal Mis-  
chiefs and Injuries by a merely Arbitra-  
ry Law, cannot be the Design of a Re-  
velation that is worthy of God. Nor  
can it be made appear to have been the  
Design of the *Christian Revelation*.

As Patience or a submissive Temper  
of Mind, is the greatest Proof of our  
Belief of the Divine Sovereignty and  
Providence ; so the *Christian Revela-*  
*tion* not only yields the most perfect  
Precepts and the strongest Motives to  
the Exercise, but furnishes us with the  
Brightest Example of it. And in this  
latter respect, especially, *Christianity*  
has, without Dispute, a just Prefernece

to

PART to all other Institutions. For by proposing to our Imitation the Example of a Person whose Conduct represented one continued Scene of Meekness and Patience, it supplies us with the surest Guide of our Practice under the Injuries and Calamities of Life. Tho' indeed such Rules for the Exercise of this Duty of *Patience* as may be formed either from our Saviour's own Conduct or that of his Apostles, appear to concern us only as Persons in a private Capacity (for such a Person was our Saviour himself, in some Sense, when on Earth, *whose Kingdom was not of this World*) not as publick Persons, or as Persons to whose Care the Common Rights are committed, and whose Conduct has a direct Influence on the Welfare or Damage of the Community.

6 JY 53

F I N I S.

20nt G

2

a  
s  
n  
e  
-

8

2